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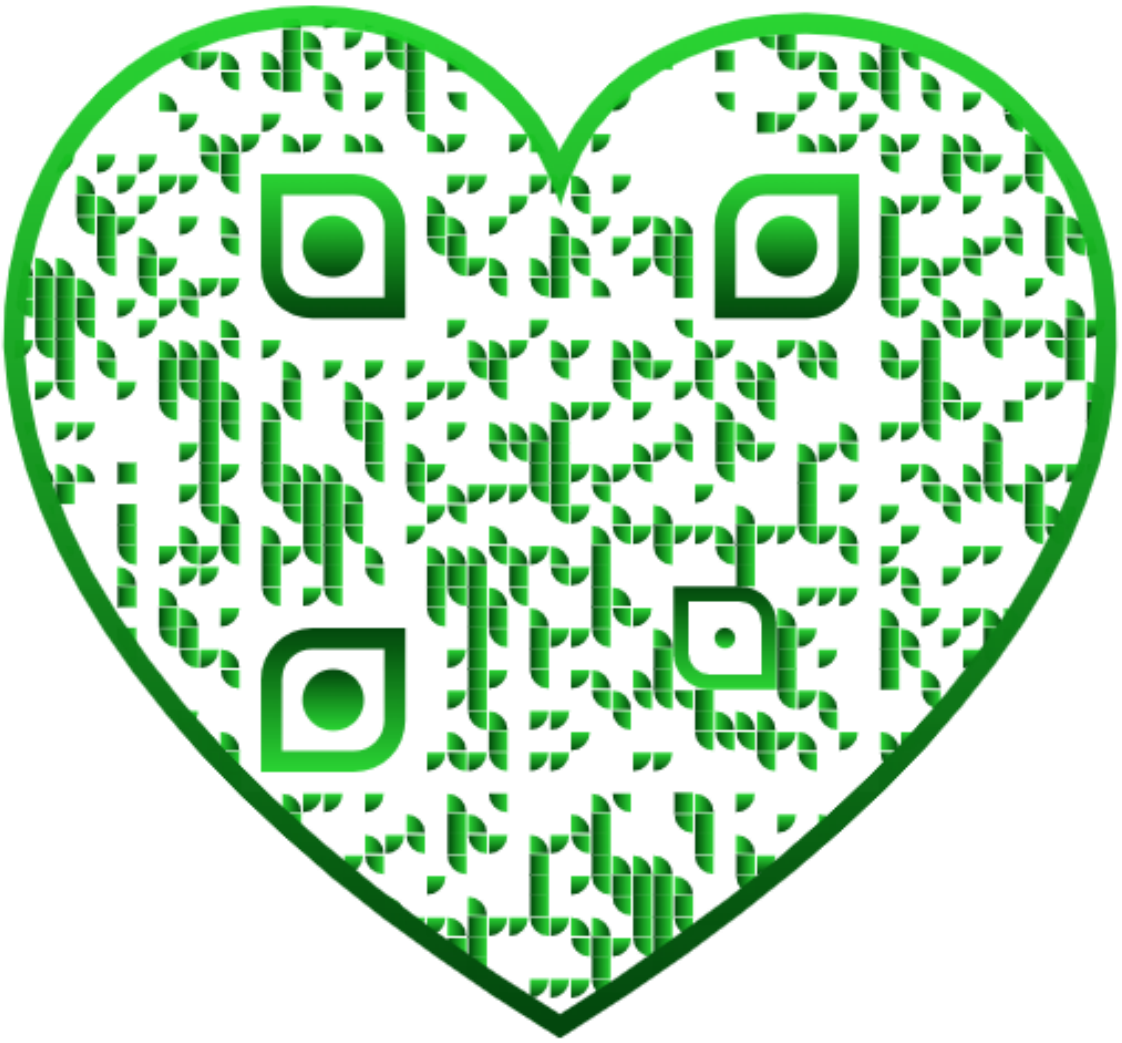

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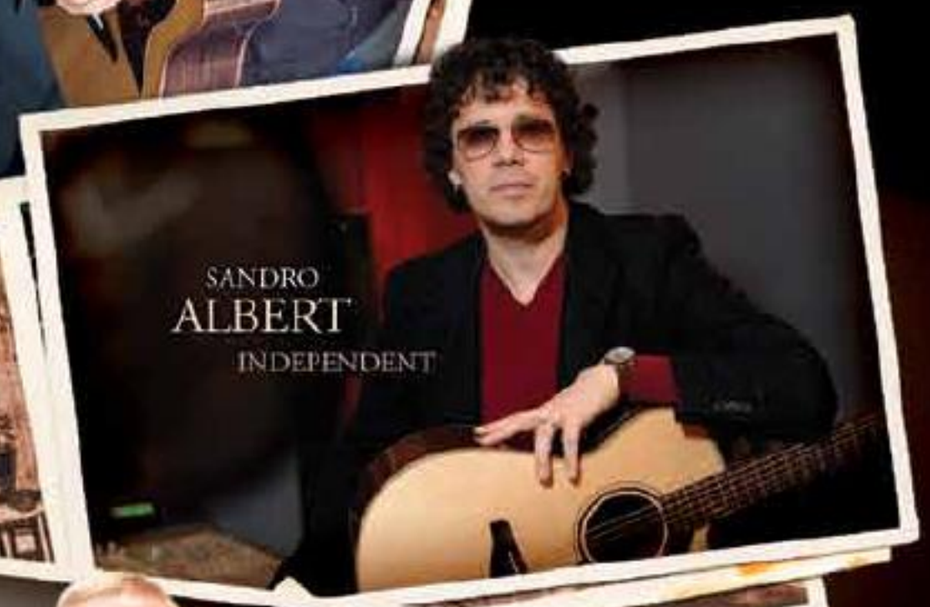

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FROM ONE COLLECTOR TO ANOTHER...

Doing Deals with Your Friends

As guitar buyers/sellers/collectors you may find yourself in several different circumstances when selling a guitar, amp, or pedal. You may be selling to a stranger on-line, or meeting a Craig's List buyer in a coffee shop (always select a public place if possible). You may be selling to others who are friends of good friends. You may be selling to one of your good friends. And lastly, you may be selling to your best friend or family member. When the circle gets closer and closer to home, naturally your thinking and pricing changes. OK, who out there just said, "If your brother wants to buy a guitar from you, that you raise the price?" That is just plain wrong. Ha!

Financially, in any deal, one of three things is going to happen. You are either going to make money, lose money, or break even. No matter how old or new a guitar may be, refinished paint or all original, rare or plentiful… there is still a certain amount of money you have invested in a piece. What you paid for it plus how much shipping cost to get it to you, how much you paid to get it set-up right, etc. There is a price, and then if you go to sell that piece - there will be one of those three scenarios you get back in return. You either will make money (a profit), lose money on it (sometimes you don't mind taking a bit of a bath if you just need to cut your loses and move on) or break even. The breakeven deal may be a good thing if you want to just get your invested money back in play again and hope to find another deal that might put you back in the "profit" category.

I strive to find those "win/win" scenarios when dealing with everyone I can. A good deal is when both parties feel like they got a fair shake. If one of you walks away disgruntled then that is a big red flag that the deal was not ideal. This "win-win" strategy intensifies when you are selling to someone close to you… that is when a new rule supercedes the "win-win" rule. The new rule says that, "Your relationship with that close person is more important than any singular guitar deal." That rule dictates that you are looking out for their welfare just as much, if not more, than your own "triumph of the deal".

You may try to make a certain percentage of profit on your sales, and that percentage goes lower the closer the person is to you… to the point where you will gladly sell someone an instrument for what you have into it. Case in point, my 35 year-old son Drew (a folksy singer/songwriter) wanted to switch from nylon string to steel string guitar. I had bought a really nice 1990's Martin D16h acoustic dreadnought at the Dallas International Guitar Show for just $750.00. When he sat down to play it and I saw his eyes light up I knew it needed to be a "cost" deal. He had funds but he was my son, and I didn't need to make a profit on that deal. In fact, I forgot to add in the shipping cost when I told him what I had into it. He was happy to pay the $750.00 for it as it is easily worth $1,000.00 or more. It made me glad as a father to help support the arts in my own family.

I have done several deals buying and selling from close friends, and some have been at cost while others have been at ½ of the profit I had hoped for on a guitar. There have been times where I had an instrument that helps a close friend complete a quest that they were on to find one of them. If they are going to keep it and cherish it – well that makes the deal even sweeter if you are blessing a good buddy. Sometimes you can place the ol' "You got a good deal from me on this one friend, so if you ever go to resell this one guitar that you were just dying to have, then please give me the first shot at buying it back." I like those deals.

If they are looking for that same guitar, but not to play it and put in their collection in a place of honor, but rather to flip and make money on it – well then, in my humble opinion, you should price it so you can make some money on it as well.

So the art of the deal really is an art, and it takes a little more class and compassion for those deals that strike closer to home.

I like the fact that I have several guitar-playing friends that buy guitars from me from time to time, and I buy guitars from them from time to time. I have some friends that just buy guitars and never sell any of theirs. I think I need to work on those friends. Ha!

So let's cherish our friendships with other guitarists, and with all deals we find ourselves in let's not forsake the golden rule of, "Do unto others as you would have them to do unto you!"

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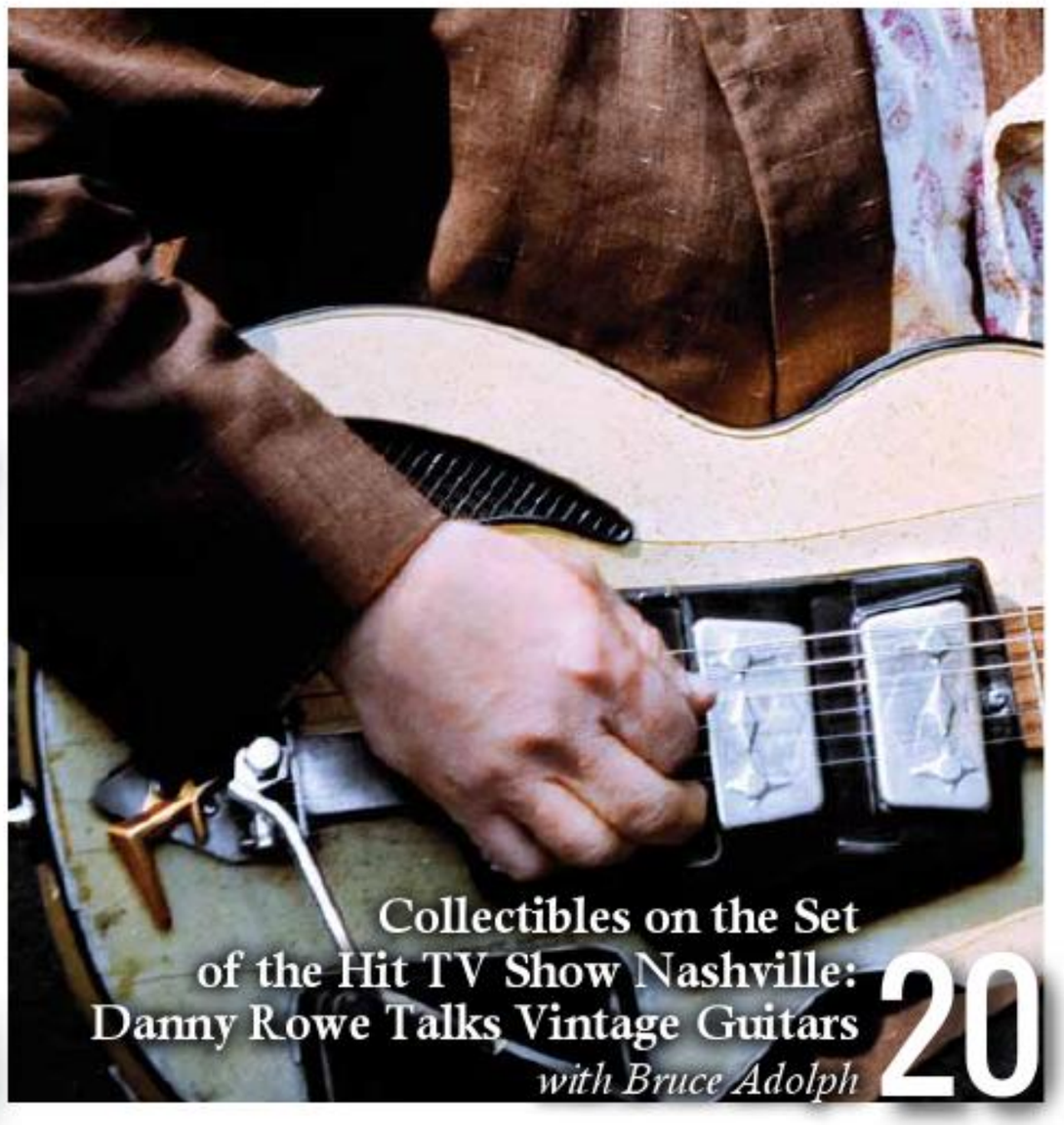

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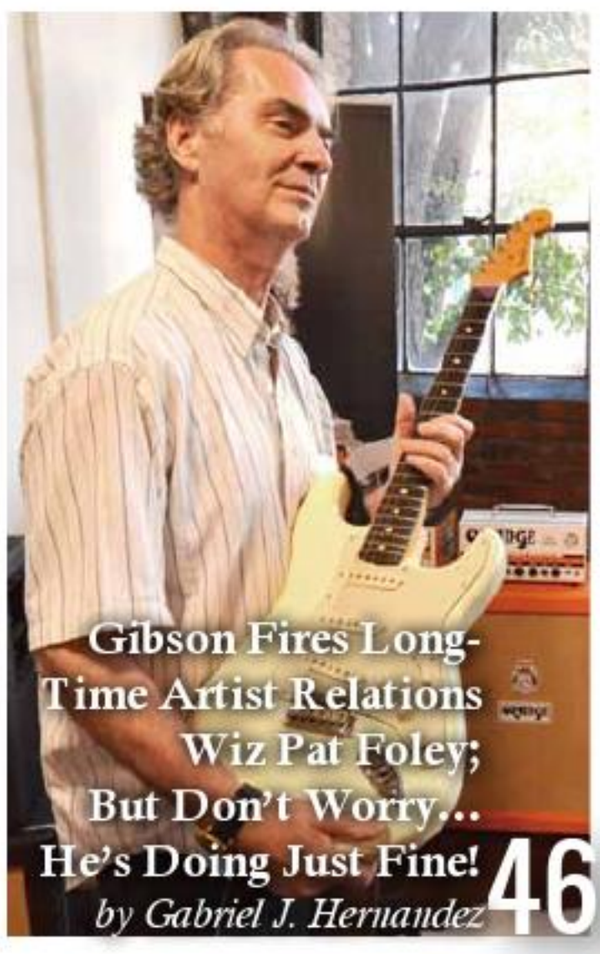

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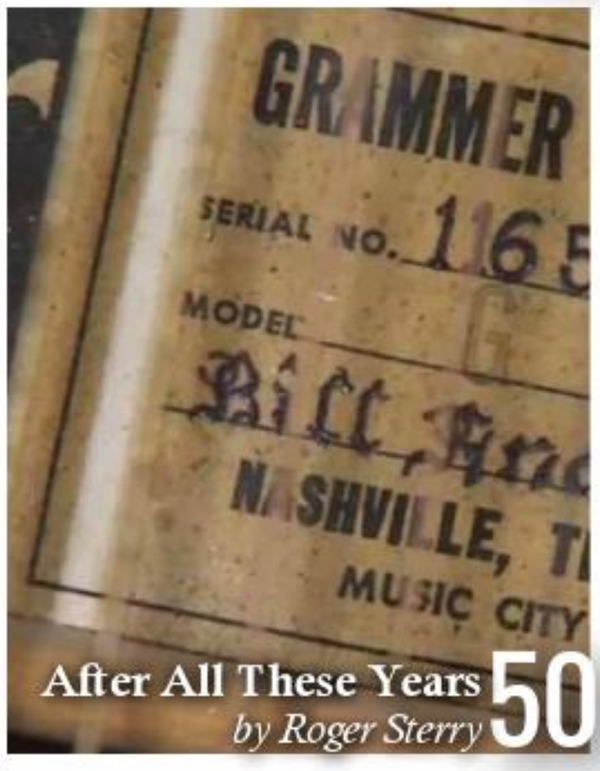

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PRODUCT REVIEW

BP Rose MAX 135

by Michael Hodge

I discovered a cool guitar company at the summer NAMM show this year. Its name is . . . BP Rose. Based in Chicago, Sam Prace has been designing and building guitars for more than a decade. His vision was to come up with a versatile guitar that would be perfect for multiple genres including Rock, Blues, and Jazz.

With so many new manufacturers it takes a special something for an instrument to be recognized above the rest. This guitar, however, immediately caught my eye. The MAX 135 is a beautiful Japanese/American built hollow-body with F hole cut outs and high-end hardware. At first sight it reminded me of a hybrid between a 335 and a Gretsch, two of my favorite guitars.

OUT OF THE BOX:

The MAX 135 comes with a sturdy contoured hard shell case. For this review I actually had the guitar you see in the YouTube video right out of the NAMM booth. This model has a Mahogany Semi-hollow body and neck, with a mahogany center block running through the body. This gives stability and sustain to the instrument while allowing the guitar to have a tighter bottom end. The top is made of laminated flame Maple, bookend-matched right down the middle with a Sunburst stain and a classic gloss lacquer finish. Many players, including myself, prefer lacquer to polyurethane for tone's sake. It's a softer material finish found on all vintage instruments, and it wears in a wonderful way.

The body measures 13.5 inches at the lower bout, leading to the 135 name. It's a little bigger than a Les Paul or Gretsch, yet a couple inches smaller than the Gibson 335 that has a full 16 inches at the lower bout. The guitar measures at 1¾ inches in thickness at the body edge, complemented with an ivory colored binding. This model comes with a Bigsby Vibrato and an adjustable Wilkinson Roller Bridge. The pickups are custom wound Lindy Fralin Chrome Humbuckers. There are the usual two tone knobs and two volume knobs, and a three-way pickup switch above the twentieth fret, similar to a Gretsch.

The Mahogany neck feels great and has killer action. It's a set-in neck with a 3-degree pitch to the body and a 12-inch radius. The neck is a 24 ¾ scale with 22 frets taking you all the way up to the lovely D note. It's trimmed with binding and fret markers on top with Mother of Pearl dot inlays on the Ebony fingerboard. The headstock has a 14-degree pitch, and comes standard with Gotoh Pearloid Tuners.

REAL WORLD:

I was impressed right off with the playability and looks. The pickups caught me off guard, in a good way. I have a pretty good idea of how typical humbuckers sound, and these are not typical. Here are my thoughts: humbuckers, in my view, do a couple things really well; they are great for rock and give you plenty of girth when played through a distortion pedal or cranked amp. They also have the sweet, slightly scooped sound in the middle position, combined with a clean amp tone. These pickups are much more Gretsch like, and though they do the humbucker thing well, there is a ton more chime and upper midrange. They're super versatile and balanced with several nice tonal options I didn't expect. I took it to my live gig and felt very confident I could get all the different sounds I needed and then some.

The frets are a good size and smooth, though I think I would have my tech polish them even a bit more. It seemed very happy with my pedal board that's normally set up for a Strat. The guys I play with live liked it and noticed that it cut through the mix well. I also noticed, when recording, that the overtones are slightly more complex than a 335. At one section of a particular song there was a Paul Jackson style funk thing, and I would usually grab the Strat. The middle position had a cool spank, the Producer liked it and we went with it. The Bigsby Tremolo gives you the ability to add the final touch to a spacious modern ethereal thing we love so much. I lean on it a lot.

CONCLUSION:

The MAX 135 turns out to be a worthy instrument. I've really enjoyed playing it. It has a nice size and shape, it's very comfortable to play, not too heavy, and looks great on camera. The neck is really friendly with that Headstock pitched back just right. If you want to be able to access some of those great Gretsch-like tones with a more original look and sound, this would make a perfect choice. It has the Japanese build quality with the good hardware and custom Lindy Fralin pickups. I'd give it five stars.

With a selling price of $1,950.00, it's not a cheap guitar. But I have to say that for a custom guitar this nice with the great hardware, it's a solid value.

For more information please visit http://bproseguitars.com.

Michael Hodge is a guitarist and producter from Nashville, TN

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QUIRKY VINTAGE

by Bob Cianci

The Kingston Sorrento Swinger

This month, we'll examine a real Japanese '60's oddball, the Kingston Sorrento Swinger made by Kawai. As we discussed last time, Kawai was one of the largest and most active Japanese manufacturers of low end student grade guitars in the Swinging '60's, with well over two hundred guitar models and at least fifty separate brand names! Prolific is not the word.

Kawai was previously known as a maker of quality pianos dating back to 1927. They started making acoustic and classical guitars in the 1950's, and began producing electrics in 1963 in association with Teisco, which proved to be a short-lived partnership. When the management team at Kawai realized they could make their own electric guitars, they ended their association with Teisco and began building electrics in their factory in Enshu. They would acquire Teisco in 1967.

Through their piano business, Kawai had already established a wide distribution network worldwide, and after attending the American NAMM show in 1965, they solidified their U.S. presence, particularly with large retail chain stores, as well as independent music retailers. From that point on, Kawai's electric guitar business went through the proverbial roof. You could buy Kawai-built guitars in Sears and Woolworth's for instance, as well as your local mom & pop music store.

Kawai guitar designs ran the gamut from downright conventional to exceedingly strange in appearance. One look at Frank Meyers's book, History of Japanese Electric Guitars, confirms the fact that Kawai's designers had some rather twisted but nifty ideas about the way electric guitars should look. They were also clever copyists, as were other Japanese guitar companies of the era, and some of the more bizarre Kawai designs now fetch many hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars on the collectible market. I am not making this up!

The Kingston Sorrento Swinger is from my collection and bears a strong resemblance to a failed CBS Fender guitar coincidentally known as the Swinger, but also referred to as the Musiclander and Arrow, a bungled attempt by Fender designer Virgilio "Babe" Simoni to use up leftover Bass V and Musicmaster parts. The Fender Swinger/Musiclander/Arrow was made in 1969 only, and never caught on. Only 250 to 300 were made in total, and today, it's a rare guitar, but still reasonably priced in comparison to other older Fender models. Truth is the Sorrento Swinger pre-dated the Fender design by several years.

I saw my first Sorrento Swinger close up two years ago on the wall of a music store in downtown Richmond, Virginia. The owner had a collection of old, weird Japanese guitars mounted on the wall, along with some very desirable old Gibson tweed amps, none of which were for sale, I was told. The looks of that Sorrento Swinger appealed to me, so I made it my business to look for one, and acquired this example last fall from eBay for the princely sum of $225.

My Swinger is completely original and features an angular body with a cutout on the bottom, and two rather unusual cutaway horns that flare outward, giving the guitar a very striking appearance. It sports a red-to-black sunburst finish (there is one for sale right now on Reverb.com in gold that looks amazing), and two low output single coil pickups, the type that appear on many Teisco/Kawai-style Japanese guitars. These underpowered pickups generally have an output in the range of 5.3 Ohms. There are two slide switches that turn each pickup on and off, and they both work. There is one volume and one tone control with small white knobs, and all the electronics function properly. The bridge is a straight bar type that rules out dead accurate intonation. No adjustable saddles here. You have to take it for what it is, after all. Or change the bridge.

The whammy bar disappeared a long time ago, as is often the case with these guitars, and the pickguard is a striped metal affair with a big wear spot near the bridge pickup. This baby has seen much playing time. I wish it could tell me the stories of the gin mills, high school dances, parties, teen hangouts, and stages it has seen. Maybe it was used by a music-smitten teenager in a '60's garage band. We'll never know.

The bolt-on neck features a rosewood fretboard with an adjustable truss rod, and a slim profile neck, very much like the current Fender Modern C shape, which is generally not to my liking. There's a large volute near the headstock. The frets themselves are vintage-thin, and need to be dressed. The headstock is the same shape as my Kawai

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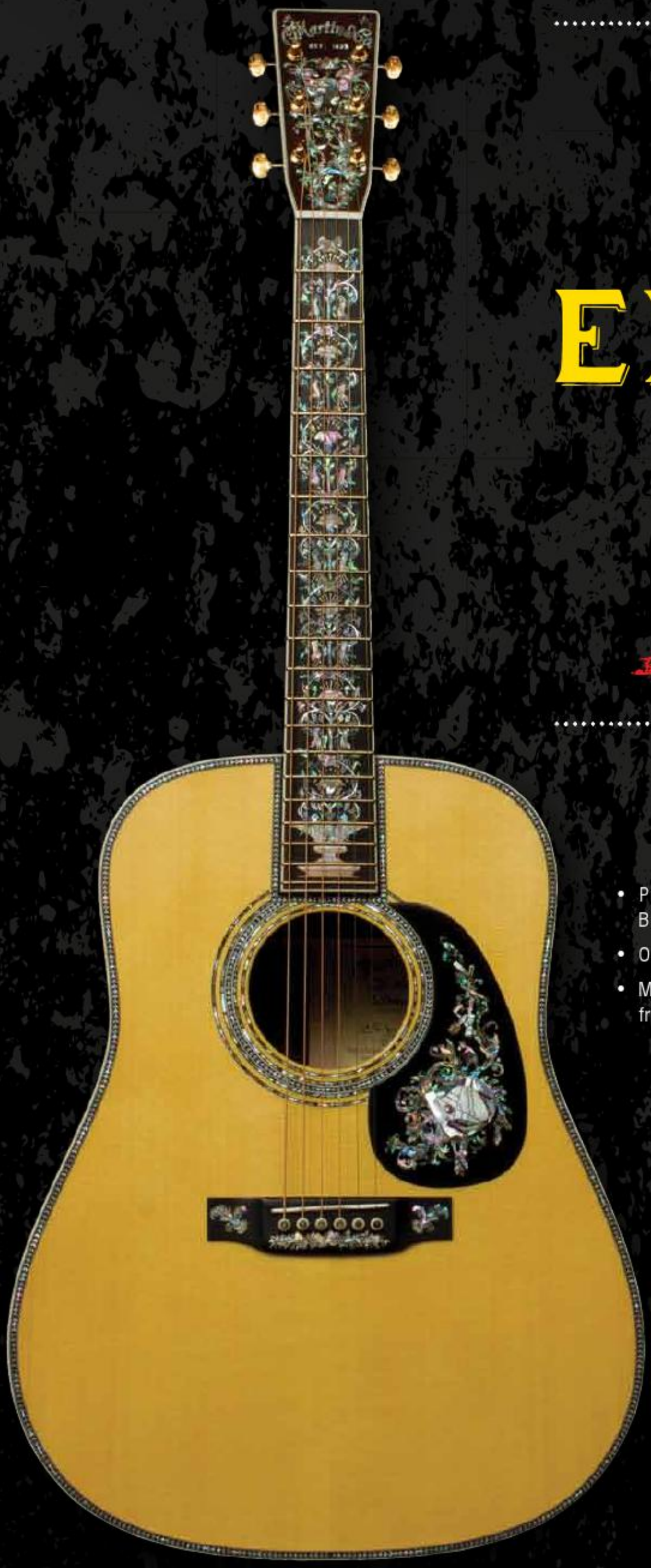

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Turning Back Time

Joe Riggio:

Guitar Refinisher

CG: How did you first start getting interested in guitar finishing?

Joe Riggio: It really stemmed from my love for spray painting when I was a kid building model car kits. I always went the extra mile to get all the details right and to make sure that the finish was as fine as I could get it with a rattle can! My father was a true "fix-it" type of guy, and he and I enjoyed restoring and painting bicycle and car parts.

About the time I was 17 and playing guitar, some friends and I took advantage of local guitar parts manufacturers and dabbled in building our own. After failing to find a local painter with any experience finishing guitars, I bought my first small compressor and spray gun and began learning how to do it myself.

CG: How did you start doing this professionally?

JR: Sometime around 1995, while I was well into running my guitar repair business inside of Guitar Maniacs, in Tacoma, WA with Rick King, a good customer of ours, Gerry Parkhurst had recently been turned on to the guitar bodies and necks being made by the then newly opened USA Custom Guitars. He knew of my interest in guitar finishing and experience in building guitars and commissioned me to paint and build 2 telecaster-style guitars for him. It was really that order that made me apply what I knew, in a more serious manner, for the first time.

CG: Where did you learn about the authentic paint colors/formulas of the original vintage guitars, and where did you find that paint?

JR: I read a very early article in Vintage Guitar Magazine that showed where the original Fender colors were taken from American automobile colors of the time. Unfortunately, I also found that the local auto body and paint stores, where I had been purchasing lacquer, didn't really have those old formulas available to them. It was surprising to me that that information had been lost over the years. When I finally set out to establish my own usable formulas for the original colors, I went on a serious quest for both original paint chips (in mint condition mind you) as well as original guitar examples that had areas of finish exposed that I could match. Batches of the original paint used in the 50's and 60's definitely did vary a bit, but I now have what I believe is the most comprehensive collection (although continually growing) of authentic formulas for using on vintage and new guitars.

CG: Was there a lot of trial and error?

JR: Absolutely. There is more than one way to apply, layer, and achieve an authentic-looking final result. Ask 10 different painters and I'm sure you'll get 10 different sets of steps to the process, especially when using nitrocellulose lacquer, which is my primary medium. Studying hundreds of vintage original guitar examples has also proven that there is an element of inconsistency, even among the techniques of the originals. I'm not too proud to admit that I'm always learning something, both in my own techniques and in the study of the way guitars were originally finished.

CG: Did you have any mentors or people who inspired you when it comes to the concept of aged finishes?

JR: The first re-finish I saw on a vintage guitar, that was made to look old, was on a 1965 Fender Jazz Bass that was done by John Brady in Everett, WA. We had it done while I was at Guitar Maniacs and he had to match the original Olympic White finish that was still present on the headstock. I remember being so fascinated by the job he had done. Gord Miller in Canada is also a fantastic painter and friend that has been a real inspiration. We have a very open relationship and have shared trade secrets between us.

CG: Tell us about some of the more significant vintage guitar models you've refinished?

JR: Most of the time, I'm working on guitars where their overall resale value governs the worthiness of the expense of the job. Fender and Gibson models from the 50's and 60's make up the large majority of those sent my way, but occasionally something will come in that has a significant sentimental value as well. The last few that I've recently finished up were a 1958 Telecaster and 2 Precision Basses from the 50's.

CG: You've recently designed your own paint shop from the ground up. What was that like?

JR: That was a huge challenge that came out of necessity after losing the availability of a professional shop that I had been using over the last few years. The financial investment was significant, as was the time spent designing and making it happen. It was something that I had attempted a few years earlier, but abandoned when a friend, Dave Nelson, offered me the use of his

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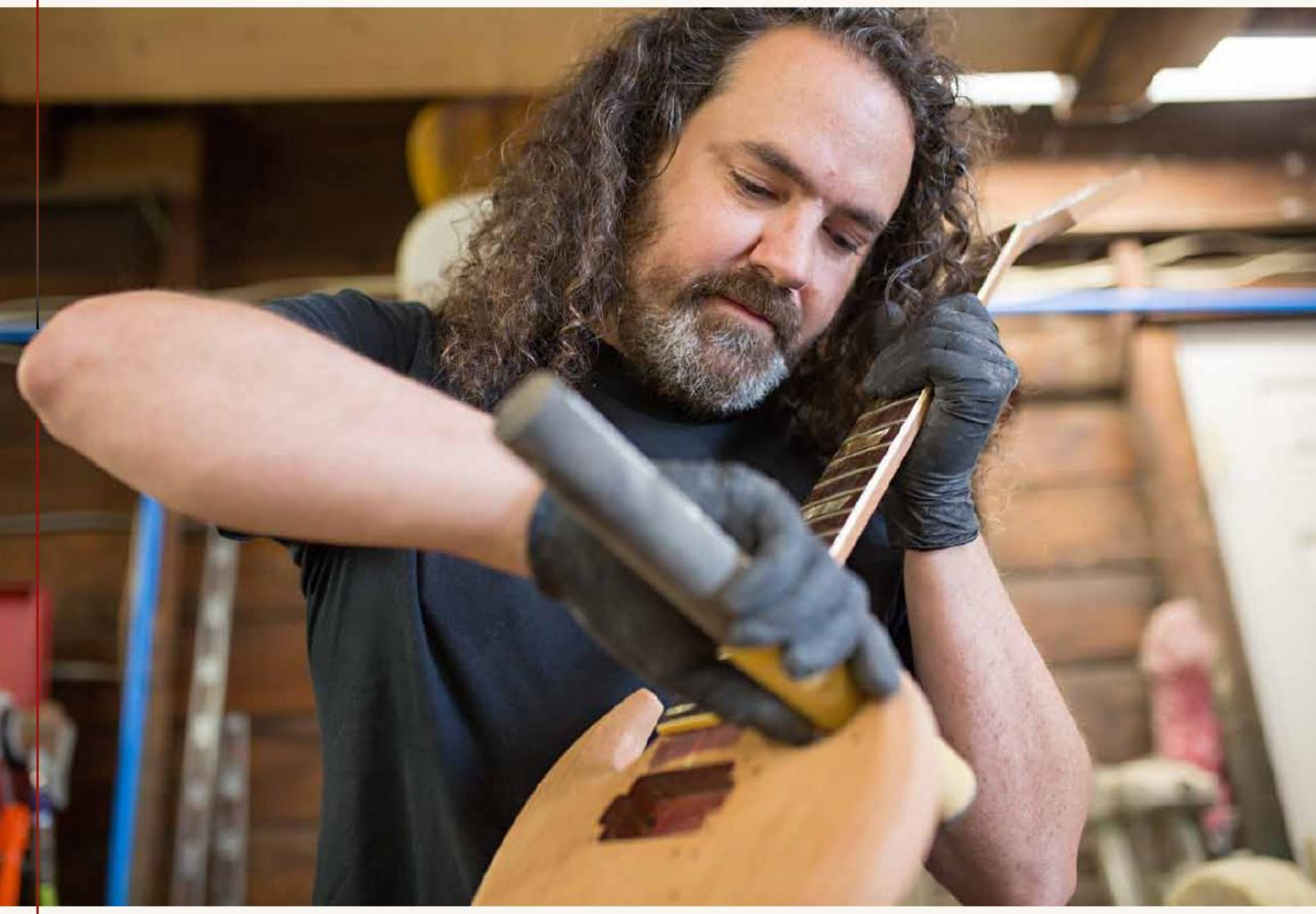

professional facility. The great thing is that I learned a great deal about what was necessary from using the already established shop when I went back to my own building project in February 2015. It's worth mentioning that my customers were extremely patient while I had that down time. I'm grateful for that, and also for the immense trust that is involved in this type of work.

CG: Tell us about your Les Paul make-overs. First of all, why do you do them, and how do you go about doing it?

JR: My make-overs range from fully stripping, refinishing, and parts replacement; to sometimes only refinishing the top of a Les Paul. I do offer that service to those desiring a more authentic-looking and feeling finish on their Les Paul reissues. The demand for this type of service is really due to the fact that Gibson doesn't quite use the same type of lacquer or color usage that they did on the early Les Paul models. I apply the same steps and process as I would if I were doing a restoration on a vintage instrument. Everything from sealers and proper grain filling to color and top coats is done as close to the originals as possible.

CG: Isn't it considered taboo by some folks to refinish vintage guitars in general?

JR: When you're talking about a guitar that still has it's original finish, then the answer would be "yes" in most cases, even if the finish is significantly worn. In the case of the vast majority of my "patients" the original finish is either heavily damaged or has been previously removed and re-done. I see various degrees of skill levels, but most of the time the old re-finishes were quite obviously done by amateur DIY-ers! So, when these guitars are properly re-re-finished, they become a more sell-able guitar.

CG: Everyone seems to have their own approach to "amber-tinted clear coats". What is yours, and why?

JR: This is something that my eyes were very sensitive to early on in the development of my techniques. Most of the original guitars were top coated, with clear lacquer, over their color coats. Over the years that clear lacquer turns various shades of yellow or amber, giving that aged appearance. Sometimes this is mistakenly referred to as "fading" which is just the opposite of what has actually happened. I have a few formulas I have developed that are very natural looking and work well for replicating this process.

CG: You build your own line of Riggio Custom Guitars too. Tell us about one of your latest creations…

JR: Yes, the Riggio line allows me to

BEFORE: 1965 Fender Stratocaster

apply the vintage authenticity to new guitars, but also be a little more creative and expand by using color schemes that may not have ever been done in the past. My latest one to be delivered was one of my "Jet" models, which is my take on the Fender Jazzmaster. I used a finish that was inspired by a copper and stainless steel bridge set and has a very unique pairing of Foam Green with a copper and silver metallic sunburst.

CG: What do you find to the most challenging aspect of refinishing guitars, and what is the most rewarding?

JR: I would have to say that one of the biggest challenges comes from having to match a new finish with the old, on the same guitar. Commonly I'll only be refinishing the body, as the neck might still have its original finish intact. Its important to me that the whole thing looks cohesive when I present it back to the owner. I guess that answers the second part of the question. I love the meeting

continued on page 54

AFTER: 1965 Fender Stratocaster : Inca Silver

ALL ABOUT AMPS

with Skip Simmons

State of the Amp

In the not-too-distant past, buying an amp was easier. You saw what your favorite players used, then went out and bought one. Or perhaps you just walked in to a music store and bought whatever they had that you could afford.

Due to the absolute explosion of interest in tube amps during the nineties, a buyer today has an incredible array of amps to choose from. Let's break it down into some manageable categories.

Boutique Amps

I am amazed at the number of low-production boutique brands on the market. It seems like there is a new one every month or so. This is a trend that I heartily endorse…. People want choices! I see three basic styles.

Faithful replicas of classic vintage amps. These amps make every effort to make a new amp that is as close as possible to (for example) a tweed Deluxe or plexi Marshall.

Modern takes on traditional amps that are not really "clones" of any particular amps but are still made for the same blues, rock, and jazz sounds that we associate with vintage amps. A master-volume would be one of the few modern touches you may find in this group.

Full-on "rock" amps that feature multiple channels, effects loops, channel-switching and control over a wide range of clean and distorted tones at any volume.

Most boutique amps are very well made. A few brands hold their value very well and most of the others offer excellent value, especially if you find a used one.

Top-Shelf Vintage Amps

These include all the classics we know and love so I don't need to list them, but here are some observations.

Big amps are cheaper. I just saw a beautiful 62 Fender Concert for $1300, a price that might not buy you a seventies Deluxe Reverb. Fewer actual "working" musicians and better PA systems means that fewer and fewer people have an actual need for a Twin Reverb or big Marshall head, and that means big savings for the buyer.

The market is fickle. I remember when a black-face Vibrolux Reverb was an instant sale, but these days the Princeton Reverb and Deluxe Reverb are far more desirable.

Looking back over 30 years I can safely say that any classic vintage amp is a good investment and that many are still undervalued. Which sounds better, an affordable new guitar through an old Princeton, or a $50,000 Les Paul through a junky new amp? If you play electric guitar, you need a great-sounding amp.

Budget Vintage

This is one of my favorite categories. I'll define it loosely as vintage amps that are still under $1000. At our recent Three Amigos guitar show, I heard some tone coming out of a Traynor Guitar Mate that was the equal of any Fender in the hall and it was priced at $550. If you have a trusted repair person you can go after a ton of alternative brands like Sano, Guild, Silvertone, Ampeg, Univox, Airline, etc. These brands don't offer the investment potential of the "big boys" but they are much more affordable and can sound just as good.

Re-Issue Amps

Fender and Marshall make re-issue versions of some of their classic amps. Most of these amps get very close to the sound of the originals but printed circuit board construction makes them inherently more fragile and difficult to repair. Beware of buying one that has already had a lot of hard use or abuse.

Acoustic Guitar Amps

One category that I know very little about but deserves discussion is amps made specifically for acoustic guitar. I remember one time when Little Charlie Baty needed something to amplify a Django-style guitar and asked me about an amp. I was fairly certain at the time that I could tweak one of his vintage amps a little and he would be set. An old Ampeg Reverberocket sounded pretty good but then a friend loaned him an AER amp that basically killed all his vintage stuff for getting that "acoustic" sound. This amp, and others like it, are basically very sophisticated mini-PA systems with all sorts of equalization that is not available with vintage circuits. I'm not crazy about all those fragile and breakable controls because repairing them would be difficult, but if you need that acoustic sound I don't know of any vintage amps that can compare.

I realize that this is just scratching the surface of the "which amp is best for me" discussion, but, hopefully, it will give you a few things to think about. Also, remember that this column is for you and I would love to answer your question here in the pages of Collectible Guitar. **Email your questions to skipsimmonsamps@gmail.com**

Skip Simmons is a nationally known vintage amp repairman.

He can be reached at SkipSimmonsAmps.com

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PRODUCT REVIEW

Cusack Tremolo AME

by Michael Hodge

If you are a guitar player you probably already know about Cusack Pedals, amps, and switchers. At this summer's NAMM the Holland, Michigan based company introduced the new Tremolo AME pedal. It's a smaller, simpler version of the renowned Tap-A Whirl Tremolo pedal. Its one of a new line of cool looking vintage-inspired pedals, with a Super-Science retro vibe. Cusack uses the trademark "Lil Chicky" knobs that perfectly compliment the clever ultra hip graphics.

OUT OF THE BOX:

The Tremolo AME comes in a nice cardboard box. Most pedal nuts like me keep their boxes so they can safely return a pedal for repair, or impress a would-be buyer for the otherwise used pedal. On top are three knobs. The top two blue ones control Level and Depth. Below them, in the middle, there is a clear Rate Knob with a flashing tempo LED. This gives you an easy way to tell the speed of the Tremolo. It looks really cool too!

Also located on the top is the normal Switchcraft Bypass switch with a corresponding Red status LED. Lastly is a small 3-way toggle mini switch selecting one of three Waveforms. To the left - standard Sine wave, middle - Square/Ramp, and on the right - a Square wave. On the top back are the input and output jacks and a 9vDC Jack, with a current draw of less than 8 mA. On the Left side is an additional RCA jack for an external Tap, which sets the tempo and engages the Brake function to ramp the speed up or down by holding the tap down. The base has four screws for battery access. The inside contains a nicely laid out circuit board and room for the battery. Overall the unit feels solid.

IN USE:

First off, the pedal sounds great. The name AME stands for Amplitude Modulation Emulator. It's a classic guitar amp effect that has been around forever and traditionally built right into the amp. FYI: At the heart of this pedal is a simple circuit combining an LED with a light sensitive resistor that work together. It's commonly referred to as a "Vactrol" circuit. For the modern musician, having all this in a pedal form gives you the freedom to put it in front of your delays and reverbs, etc. I set the pedal in my signal chain in place of another popular Tremolo.

Compared to a typical Trem pedal, there are several features that set this one apart. I do like being able to quickly choose the waveform with the mini switch. The Sine wave setting sounds like a smooth, classic Fender tremolo. The Square setting seems more Voxish to me, and the Hybrid Square/Ramp is kind of unusual. All three settings cover most of the normal Tremolo sounds you might use. The Choppy studder effect is not as extreme as I expected, but still cool. I was also digging the ramp up and back effect that you get when you hold down the Tap switch. I had to mess with adaptors to get the RCA plug and cable into a ¼" momentary Tap switch. Having the ability to control output volume is really nice too, if you are going for a dramatic effect like on a bridge or something. The flashing blue LED in a translucent knob is genius. It reacts slightly differently to the 3 waveform settings. I think we'll see other manufacturers follow and take advantage of these new pedal parts.

One of the nice features of this pedal is simply its size. Also, having the jacks up top allows you to put pedals closer together. I think this an ideal spot for jacks. It would have been cool to squeeze the RCA Tap jack up there too, but there's not much room. In general the Cusack is pretty clean. IMO the pedal likes to be nearer to the front of the signal chain. I didn't hear it break up, but everything seemed noisier with distortion pedals cranked up in front of it for some reason. Might be something with my board? There isn't any pop when switching it in or out. I like that!

CONCLUSION:

The Tremolo AME is one cool looking, well designed, and sturdy pedal.

Everyone likes pedals that look as good as they sound. Cusack has accomplished this and then some. The features missing from the big brother Tap-A Whirl Tremolo Pedal are not a deal breaker to me. Most players are concerned a lot about how many pedals they can fit in a limited space. Therefore I would gladly recommend this to my friends as a cool pedal to own. The list price for the Tremolo AME is $185.00.

For more info go to: cusackmusic.com.

Michael Hodge is a guitarist and producter from Nashville, TN

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COLLECTIBLES ON THE SET OF THE HIT TV SHOW

NASHVILLE

photo by Matt Thiemann

DANNY ROWE TALKS VINTAGE GUITARS

with Bruce Adolph

I have said it for years now, "Nashville is my favorite city to visit" and I mean it. When I heard that there was a new television drama set in "Music City" it perked my interest. When I heard that T-Bone Burnett and Buddy Miller were involved, I decided to give it a try. The remarkable thing about this weekly television hour is that it leaves you often wondering, "Where did they find such good actors who are this talented musically?" or conversely, "Where did they find such good musicians that can act so well?" "Nashville" the show is starting it's fourth season and Judy and I watch it every week, looking forward to the cinematic camera shots of places we know in Nashville, looking forward to the twisting plot lines that make a soap opera work, but more importantly, looking forward to the high quality of music presented on the show. It is a "tour de force" of excellent songwriting and musicianship. At Summer NAMM Buddy Miller introduced me to Danny Rowe (the man in charge of the guitars on the set). If you watch the show for any amount of time you cannot help but notice the starring role collectible guitars play in the program… Let's find out more from Danny...

photo by Laura Godwin

Bruce Adolph: Danny, how did you get recruited for this job?

Danny Rowe: I had worked on a TV show called "Wedding Band" that was on the TBS network. We filmed ten episodes of it and then TBS went to a ½ hour format (which ended that show). I was in charge of setting up the band performances in each episode, which was fun, because every "wedding/event" was a different theme. Some of the producers of that show then went to Nashville to film the pilot episode of "Nashville" and then waited on the word for a green light to go to series. When that came through, I was called again to see if I'd be interested in coming to "Nashville". When I heard that T-Bone Burnett was involved and his wife Callie Khouri (Thelma & Louise) was the creator of the series - it was a no-brainer... but not a stress-less decision. I mean - who wouldn't panic about working somewhere under T-Bone's umbrella? He casts quite a shadow in the music and film world! And from the get-go, I knew with his imprint - it was going to be great musically. And with his love and knowledge of vintage gear - it would have the right DNA for a show called "Nashville". Now, the only question was, "Where can we get vintage pieces that make sense?" After all, in Nashville, there certainly are some of the greatest vintage guitars in the world. But not everyone wants to loan them to a prop guy from Los Angeles!

Fortunately it was decided from the start to match what's happening in the recording sessions. Again, this sounds easy enough, but the challenge was when a last minute overdub, or another guitar track needed to be cut literally hours before we filmed a performance... it was a scramble to match what you are hearing. That's when I really got to worship at the feet of Buddy Miller and Colin Linden. For all intents and purposes (to me) they were working like T-Bone's right and left hands! The pool of vintage knowledge became very deep indeed for me at that point, and so did Nashville's wonderful music community for me. All any musician wants is to be able to watch a show and know what you're seeing is what you are *hearing*! If it's a Tele in the neck position or a Les Paul with P-90's, or a Gretsch with FilterTrons - right?

The fun stuff from Season 1 of "Nashville" was scrambling last minute to get a bunch of ears on, "What's that new guitar part? A Mando-guitar? A Bouzouki?" Something from the odd and cheap family that has to be recast on camera so that the housewife in Boise, Idaho isn't scratching her head thinking, "Why is my favorite cast member on "Nashville" playing a toy guitar?" Or something *like* that anyway. (*laughing*)

The music from this show is incredible. Each part is crafted perfectly, in my opinion, to tailor the song and the scene. But sometimes it may require a guitar choice that makes cinematic sense. An example would be if something old, cool, and funky gets used on a session, but in our story it's a modern touring band... what would be the right call to tell that tale? Again, in my opinion - you may very well see that old, cool, funky instrument with any number of bands out there touring these days, but in our show, we like to wait for *that* little story to get told as well.

Bruce: How did you go about placing each guitar with the actors role/personality?

Danny: From a starting point of the characters in the show "Deacon Claybourne" (Charles Esten) is one of Nashville's first call guitar players. He would know how to best serve the song as opposed to technique, etc. He, like so many great guitar players, has a collection of great tools in his toolbox. His arsenal is as deep as we need it to be! In real life, Chip fell in love with a 1955 Gibson J-200 I found at Carter's Vintage Guitars in Nashville. It matched very closely to Buddy Miller's 1953 or 1954 Gibson SJ-200 that we have

used in the show in earlier scenes. A truly magical guitar that Emmylou Harris gave to him! The reason for the switch was we were filming a scene at The Grand Ole Opry and I thought it would be good if "Deacon" could plug in for that scene instead of being planted in front of a mic. A week later we filmed our second "On The Record" (A live performance concert by the actors) for ABC television live at The Opry and Chip asked if Walter and Christie Carter would let him play that Ol' Gibson guitar on it. It never made it back to Carter's shop!

photo by Matt Thiemann

Another one of Buddy's "gift guitars" used in the show was a 1933 Martin 0-17 used by "Maddie Conrad" (Lennon Stella) given to Buddy by T-Bone Burnett. I found a 1940 Gibson L-00 at Corner Music in Nashville that had the original bridge pulling up, some bracing loose and it was in need of a refret… but it spoke to me for some reason. "Gunnar Scott" (Sam Palladio) had asked me to keep my eyes open for a small body guitar, I told him about this one but he decided to pass, so I took a chance and bought it. The guys at Gibson's repair department did the work and right when they finished up had asked me if Miranda Lambert could use it in her video "Automatic". What a great way for that little guitar to come back to life I thought. Later Callie had asked me to start thinking about a guitar for "Deacon" to give to "Maddie" at the end of Season 2. I showed her (Lennon) mine and, as always, I double-checked with Buddy to see if he liked the idea, and so that guitar became a prime time TV star. The thing I love the most about it is how much Lennon loves it!

We have some of the most talented people working, both on camera and off. Everyone's understanding of what we all bring to the table has been shared and elevated . When you work on a show called "Nashville", you understand quickly how deep this town's love of great music is; all kinds of music.

Early on in the series we had Sam Palladio's character favoring a LG-2 that was a new piece that had some sexy wear to it. It helped tell a story of how much "Gunnar" cranked away churning out some of the show's standout numbers. When he moved to a bigger stage, Colin had a great 1966 Gibson Country Western model that fit the bill perfectly for that transition. Sam can be seen performing with that guitar from time to time on and off camera. Speaking of

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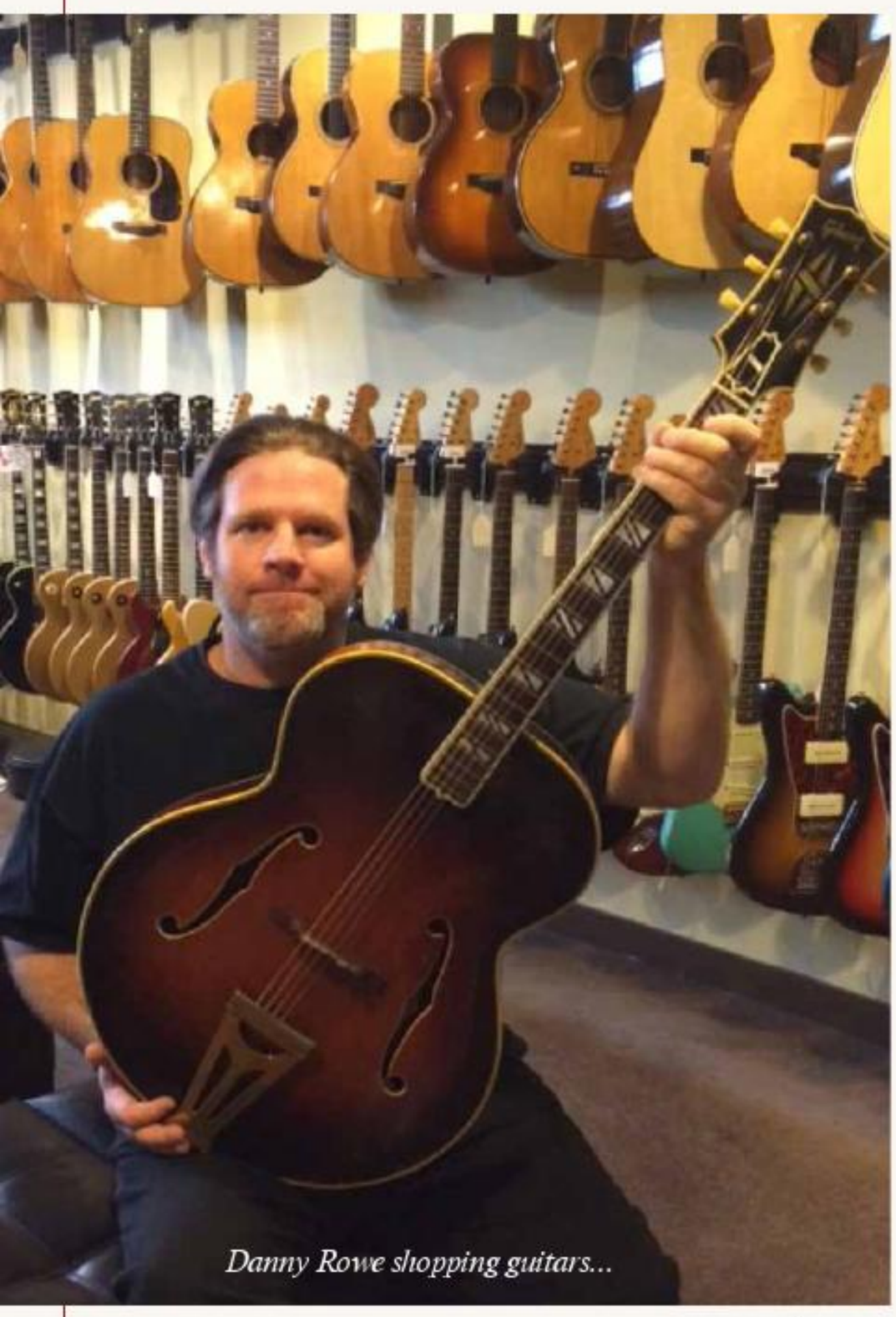

Danny Rowe shopping guitars...

Colin - he records easily around 80% of our cast-members guitar parts in the sessions with Buddy. He actually *plays* in the style of each of our cast members - then teaches them their parts. To be able to adopt that level of musicianship for each cast member - on every song is staggering. Colin's stable of guitar stars seen on the show is just as dizzying. He has two Gibson CF-100e's... his main one seen on camera as "Avery Barkley's" (Jonathan Jackson) is a 1951. The "cousin" to that one (as we call it) is a 1954. The small-bodied LG-2 "Deacon" can be seen working things out on is a 1956 with an L.R. Baggs pickup in it. We've also seen "Deacon" tearing our hearts out with a 1966 Martin D-18 Hi-String guitar and a 1971 Martin D-12-18 as well. "Layla Grant" (Aubrey Peeples) archtop Gibson is a 1935 L-4. "Will Lexington" (Chris Carmack), plays new Gibson Hummingbirds as well as Fender Teles' and Strats' on the show. But in real life he enjoys building his own. He also owns a beautiful '55 or '56 Martin D-28. We've heard it is really too close to call year-wise, but either way - it is a winner I doubt he'll ever part with!

You'll catch some great new and old Gretsches, Fenders, Martins, Gibsons, and Danelectros. I'm particularly proud we have had actors playing capo'd Baritone guitar parts on network TV... especially the vintage ones.

The story that gets told on the TV show I feel is a good one. A true one that weaves the old pieces with the new ones and the wonderful vendors that help us all tell the story of music in any town, but especially here in Nashville.

Bruce: Does the show own the guitars?

Danny: The show doesn't ever get the chance to own any of the gear. If we don't rent it from one of the great vintage shops in town or out of town (Carter's Vintage Guitars, Gruhn Guitars, Killer Vintage Guitars, or Norms Rare Guitars) it is rented or loaned to us by the vendor or maker.

Bruce: Is there a guitar tech on set for the music scenes?

Danny: I'm the guitar tech on set and in the show! That was Callie's idea. Being here in Nashville has been a blessing for me to meet such wonderful people such as Master Luthier Joe Glaser, the gang at Gibson Repair, Maple Byrne, David Graef, and some of the best guitar techs in the business. I happily reach out to them and some of the greatest musicians I've met with technical questions, which really makes things fun for me to get questions answered and the facts set straight.

Bruce: At the end of last season when Rayna breaks one of Deacon's guitars - how did you prepare that scene so all would go well?

Danny: *The broken guitar!* Our hero guitar was a 1939 Gibson J-35 I rented from Carter Vintage Guitars. Now, nobody in their right mind would want to break a vintage guitar, right? Well, you can't say we're not committed to our show. When the story first came to me I reached out to my folks at Martin guitars with the thought of, "If I can find a vintage piece, perhaps I can get a hold of a few (as you always want at least three to break) new guitars". My feeling was with the look of a Martin headstock old and new - with some movie magic added by our on-set painter Eddie Nichols and some help from our editors back in Los Angeles - we could do the old switcheroo. That could work... right? Not so fast. Chris Martin couldn't stomach the idea – which I totally understand. As I said, nobody would *want* to harm a vintage guitar or a lovely new one. When I spoke with Callie about how I thought "Rayna Jaymes" (Connie Britton) should swing the guitar against the floor she pointed out that she'd be wearing high heels and that might make things awkward for Connie. She thought maybe hitting the guitar against a wall would be better, as she took Buddy Miller's 1955 00-18 Martin out of my hands and lightly swung it towards a wall on stage. When she recoiled back she accidentally hit the corner of a grand piano and put a fair sized gash into the side of it. We both turned a whiter shade of pale, as anyone could imagine! Joe Glaser's shop got a little business from that episode.

I called my people at Gibson to see if there was something that might work, and they had some old, out of production, Gibson Garrisons that were unusable to them but we're gold to me. The pickguards were really close to the 1939 J-35. The rest of it needed some paint magic and some serious deconstruction before I'd put the guitar in Connie's hands. It is so easy to crack a guitar when you don't mean to (ask Callie), but if you really try - it's near impossible. We had to cut fine lines through the backside of the body on the treble side, drop in a couple loose pieces of bracing and a little dust to get the effect we all were after. I loosened up the string tension so nothing would bite back on Connie or her hands. We left the vintage guitar in and she'd raise it over her head, we'd cut, and then I'd give her a Garrison to smash. I'd check with her from across the room each time to make sure she was ok - which of course she was because she's the incredible Connie Britton! After our third smashed guitar, everyone was happy with what the cameras got and she was OK too. So I took back a now famous and spared vintage

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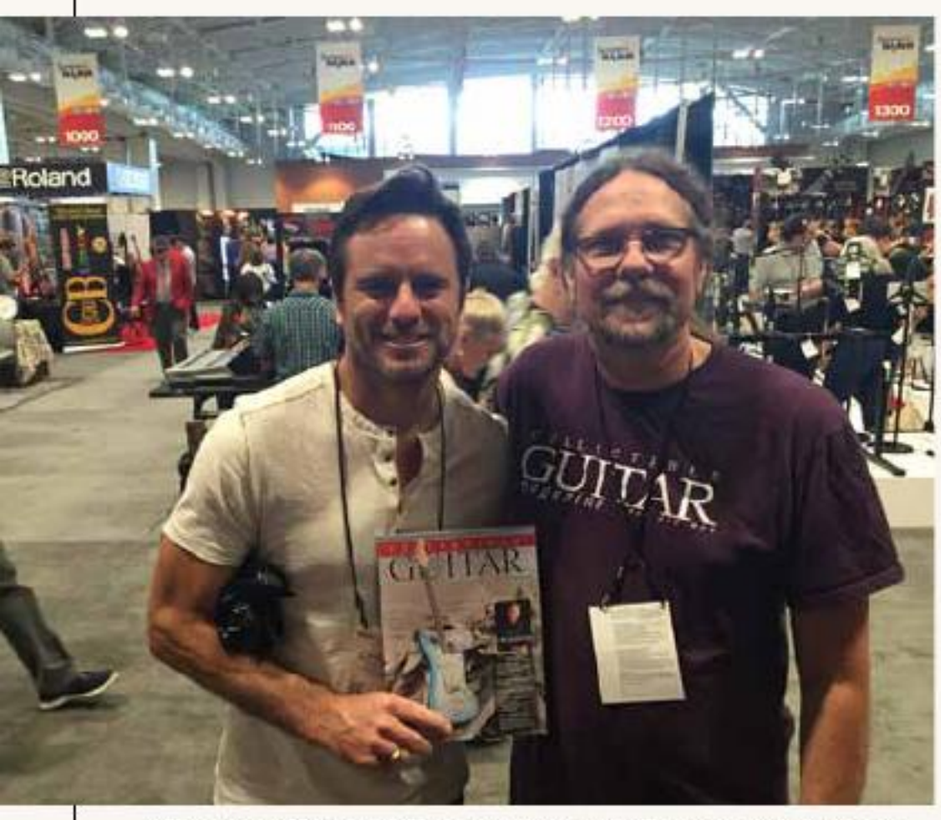
Gibson guitar to Carter's.

Bruce: In this new season of the show will there be any new guitars introduced - vintage or otherwise?

Danny: New and vintage pieces for Season 4 - we're already into our fourth episode of the new season and let me just say this... wait and see! ◇

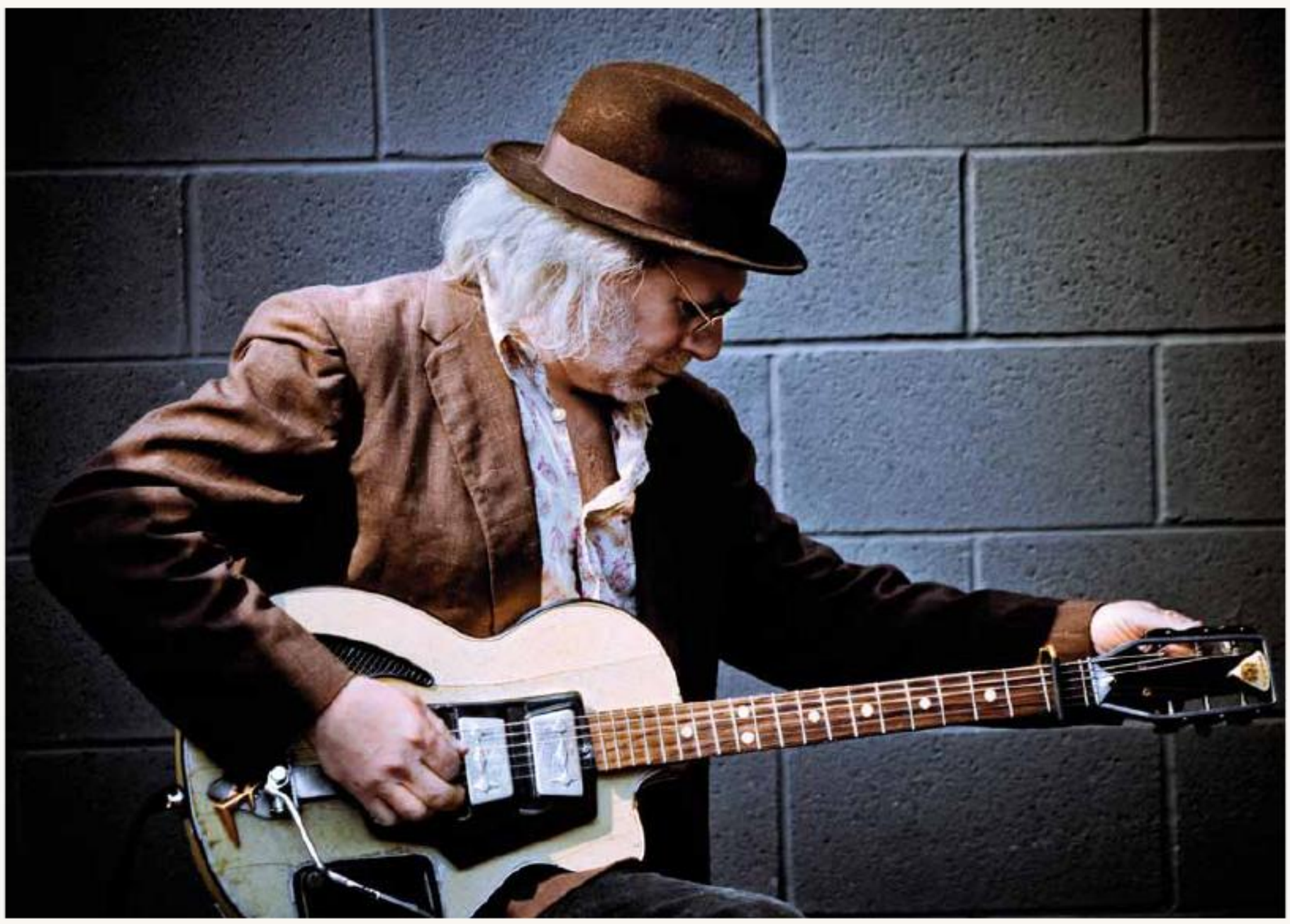


Charles Esten "Deacon" with Bruce Adolph at Summer NAMM

© Laura Godwin

"The music on our show is about bringing out character in the characters. Many of the characters have key guitars that help identify their styles and personalities. When Layla Grant plays a 1930s Gibson Archtop, we know she has a love for the timeless and the romantic. This, I believe, helps to give her character context and depth. And we, of course, love the sounds of unique instruments that have their own histories. We use these same guitars to make the recordings."

~ Colin Linden



"The guitars we pick for our characters are not casual choices - we look for the soul connection. It's like when I pick a guitar for myself; there's an attraction, a way it feels in your hands, the way you can pull sounds from it. A guitar becomes your life partner. I've been playing my main guitars for over 40 years."

~ Buddy Miller

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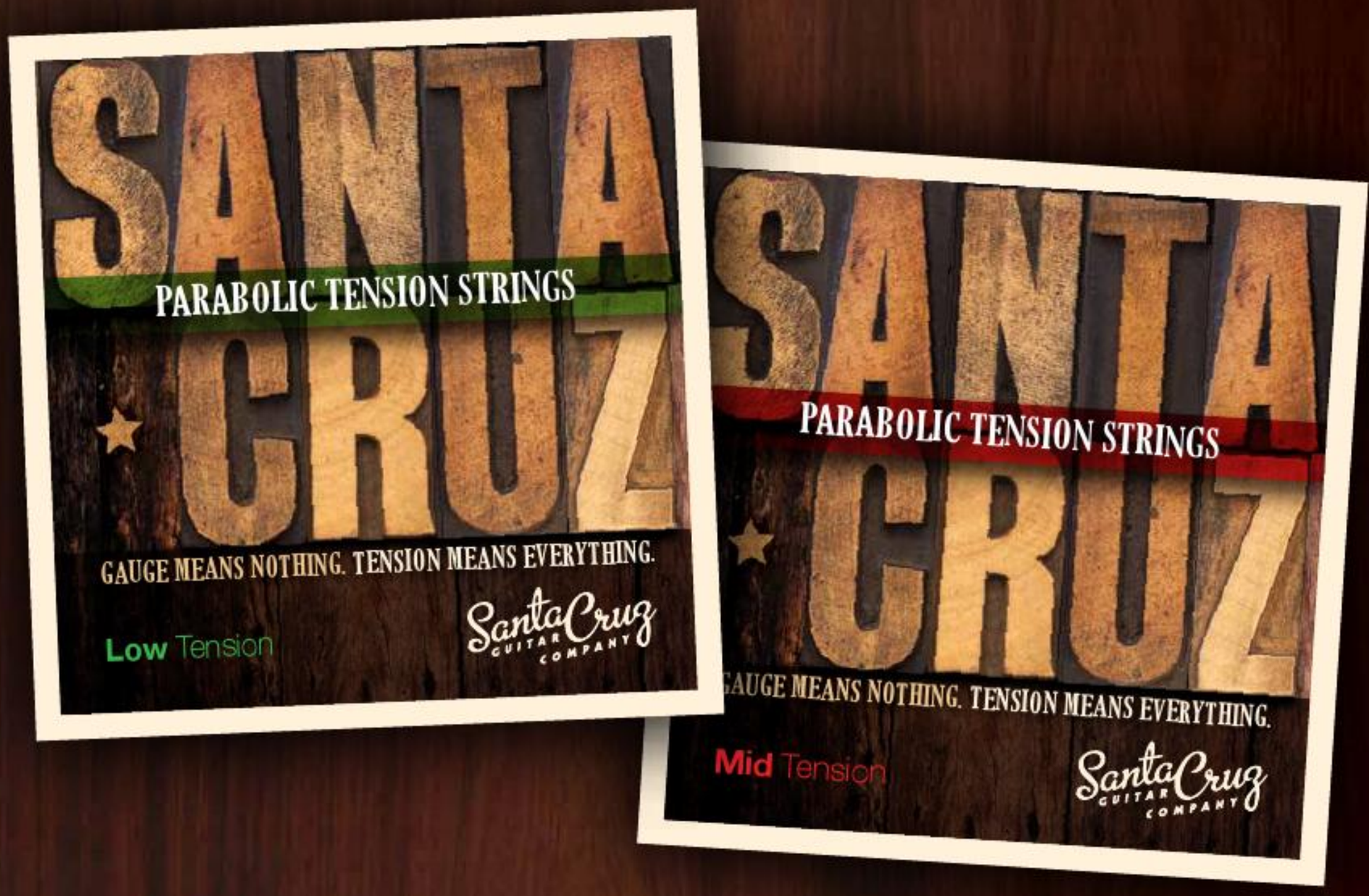

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Blackstar Fly 3-Watt Mini Amp

by Bruce Adolph

I have always been a sucker for small little practice amps. I see them and say to myself, "Wow, what a great idea!" Then, when I plug a guitar into them, I'm always disappointed by their lack of tone and volume. They feel more toy-like than useful. Well, the Blackstar Fly 3-Watt Mini Amp comes in a small package too, but finally delivers the goods I am looking for.

This transistor amp has two channels, one 1/4" size for your guitar cable; and the other, a mini input for your MP3 player/smartphone. The mini allows you to play music through the amp to play along with on your guitar, or to just use as a playback system for your music. For the money (just $59.99 street) it is a handy amp to have around, not only for your guitar practice needs, but also I like to use it to play my tunes through. I sit at my laptop working and don't really enjoy the sound quality from my little speakers on my computer. This Fly sounds way more full and is pretty loud when you crank it; the 3" speaker puts out a lot of volume for it's size. You can buy the Fly 103 extension cab ($29.99 street) and then have a 6-Watt stereo system all for just $99.99.

From the guitarist side of things you have a gain level and a volume level to adjust your gain structure and distortion with, as well as an OD (Overdrive button)… this gives you a lot of options here, and the tone is convincing to boot! You can further shape the tone with Blackstar's ISF (Infinite Shape Feature) EQ knob. Add to that a digital "tape" delay and you have a very useful (and highly portable) battery-powered guitar combo amplifier.

You get quite a decent tone at low volumes, and there is a nice resonance to this little amp when you dial things in. There is also an emulated headphone output jack for private practice, plus a DC input jack for an aftermarket power supply. I would use that to recharge the chargeable batteries. This little bundled cube of guitarist joy weighs in at just 2 pounds.

Ever since Blackstar first came on the scene several years ago I have been a fan of what they are doing. I wasn't expecting them to go this small when they were making smaller amps but I am certainly glad that they did. For the money I haven't seen anything that can touch this Fly – well done Blackstar! BTW, you may need to buy two of these as my wife has claimed the Fly amp for herself so she can play her music from her iPhone around the house. ◇

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ROAD GOLD

by Michael Elsner

Touring with The Kemper Profiler & Remote

Greetings from Shanghai China!

Now, it's no secret that I'm a huge fan of the Kemper Profiling Amp. I think this is quite possibly the most groundbreaking piece of gear developed for guitarists in the last 15 years. I've been privileged enough to watch a good handful of the most well respected studio musicians, along with some of the best engineers and producers, sit in a studio, profile their favorite amplifiers, and not be able to tell the difference between their amp and the profile coming from the Kemper. That alone speaks volumes about the unit as a studio tool, but with the recent release of the new Kemper Remote footswitch, the Profiler is also the ideal touring rig.

For the past few weeks I've been touring through China with an artist who has a fairly large following in this country. Our small entourage is comprised of 6 people: 1 artist, 3 band members, a tour manager, and the representative from the foreign booking agency, who also acts as our indispensable interpreter. The schedule has been pretty grueling as every day we're either hopping on a flight, or taking a high-speed train to a new city. That said, between our luggage and gear, traveling light is ideal. Fortunately, both the Profiler Head and Remote fit snugly into the Kemper Gig Bag, which also fits conveniently in the overhead bin of both large and small aircrafts. I have to admit that I was a bit apprehensive at first about sending the bag with both units through the x-ray machines at security, and expected daily searches, but getting them through has not been a problem.

We are playing for 90 minutes each night, and being the only guitar player means that sonically I have to cover a fair amount of ground. This is where the Profiler, along with the Remote, has been absolutely invaluable. The entire show's setlist is programmed into the Performance mode of the KPA, which allows up to 5 different "Rigs" to be stored for each song in the set. Within each song, I have separate rigs stored, and named, according to the relevant part of the song: Intro, Verse, Chorus, Solo, and Bridge or Breakdown. Each song can then be accessed by pressing the Bank Up and Down buttons, and each sound for the specific sections of the song can be accessed by pressing any one of the 5 bottom row buttons on the Remote.

Setup & Connection:

The ironic aspect of this setup is that I'm running the simplest, yet most sonically diverse rig I've ever had with any other previous touring rig. Setting up literally takes roughly 3 to 4 minutes and only requires 4 cables: 1 Power Cable, 1 Speaker Cable, 1 30' Guitar Cable, and the provided 21' Ethernet Cable that connects the Remote to the Profiler. For the large festivals, I run the KPA direct and monitor through in-ears, while for the clubs I still run the Kemper direct, but I use a backlined 4x12 cabinet as my own amp monitor on stage.

Programming The Remote:

There are 4 Effect buttons on the Remote that can be individually assigned from rig to rig. What makes these extremely convenient is that each button can be programmed to turn on or off up to 4 effects at one time. For example, if you use an overdrive and delay at the same time for a solo, you can program the first effect button to turn on and off both the overdrive and delay with just one tap. Taking this one step further, let's say you want to also turn on a phaser for the solo, you can program button 1 to turn on or off the overdrive, delay and phaser with just one tap. Buttons 2, 3 and 4 can be programmed to turn on or off any other combination of effects for that particular rig, so the Remote allows you to make changes to the sound with one push that would generally entail an entertaining tap dance routine on

continued on page 42

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THE FRETBOARD LESS TRAVELED

by Rich Severson

Minor 7th Flat Five Inversions

This is one of the most overlooked chords, and yet it can be one of the most useful. If you'd like to sound just a little bit different, maybe a cut above everyone else, then this lesson is for you! The min7b5 chord is mainly thought of as the II chord of a minor key (i.e. F#m7b5 of E minor) however it is enharmonic, sounds the same but with a different name, as a Minor 6th chord, which can be used as a I or IV in a minor key (i.e. Em6 and Am6 of E minor.) Now here's the good part, this chord can be used in almost every song as a Dom9th with the root omitted. (i.e. D9 of G major) Remember a 9th chord can take the place of any Dom7 chord. So in every song with a 7th chord, one of these inversions can be substituted. So just think about it, in a blues tune you could use these voicings on virtually every chord. Imagine the possibilities!

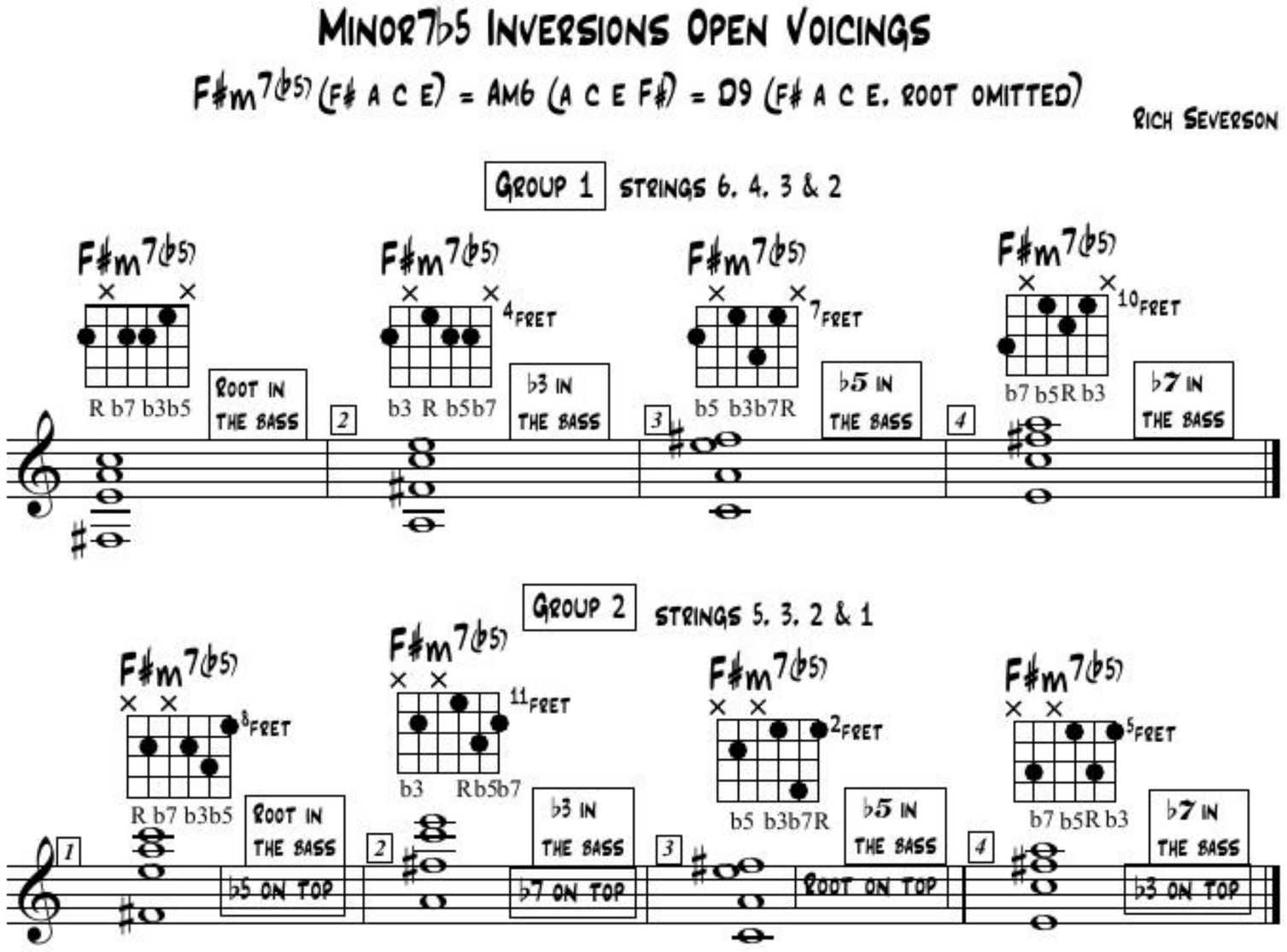
Let's look at the makeup of the chords before we play them so we understand how it all works. A min7b5 chord is spelled Root,b3,b5,b7 so in the key of F# the notes would be F#,A,C,E. A min6th chord is spelled R,b3,5,6 so in the key of A the notes would be A,C,E,F#. A 9th chord is spelled R,3,6,b7,9 so in the key of D the notes D,F#,A,C,E if we omit the root (let the bass player play it) we have all the same notes. Magic!

To the left, you'll find diagrams of inversions in 2 open voiced string groups. Open voicings means skipping a string within the chord shape. Each chord grid is an inversion of the min7b5 chord with one of its factors as the bass note. If you learn to play them up the neck as well as switching between string groups you'll add a whole new dimension to your rhythm playing.

For a video on this lesson go to 99CentGuitarLessons.com and click the Chords button, then scroll down to the lesson. Seeing the chords in action might make the difference in learning them.

Till next time,

Rich



Rich Severson is a guitarist, clinician, author, and former GIT instructor.
To preview Rich's music and guitar educational products go to

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Dialtone Lets You Dial in Your Pickup Sound

by Eric Dahl

Pickup innovations are rare and exciting since they don't come along very often, and the gold standards of pickup tonality have been set by people like Leo Fender, Ted McCarty, and Seymour Duncan.

At the recent summer NAMM though a new contender with an innovative twist on pickups has come forward, and that brand is Dialtone. Upon first seeing the pickups, before they are installed in a guitar, they look like miniature crystal radios that someone forgot to place a frequency screen in for finding your favorite station.

The company founder is John Liptac, and as the story goes, he developed his new pickups after purchasing a new guitar and wasn't able to achieve the sound he sought, even after trying a variety of pickups, amps, and effects. The difference between most of us and Liptac is that he had a background in physics and engineering, so he decided to build and design a product that would produce the sound in his head.

As you can see by the pictures, the biggest difference in the Dialtone pickups is the addition of two knobs on the top of the pickup case. One knob adjusts the "resonant frequency" (similar to the tonal variations in a wah pedal) and the other fine-tunes the "Q-value" (controls tightness of the sound and warmth). The pickups are active, so they require a 9volt battery that will provide 1,400 hours of play time, or you can go with 18volt for more headroom.

Dialtone made their pickups simple to install by making them solderless, and if you get confused during installation they provide one hour of complimentary phone installation help free of charge! On average, removal of your old pickups and installation of the Dialtone pickups should only require one hour and some basic tools.

At this time they are only offering humbuckers, but from what I am told single coil, P90's, 7/8 string, and acoustic pickups are in development, plus several bass guitar options should roll out next year. You can buy them as individual pickups or in pairs, and they come in standard or high output with four different finish options – silver, black, chrome plated, and gold plated.

The response from players has been very positive, especially for musicians who love to fine-tune their quality of tone or are seeking higher gain sounds. What separates Dialtone pickups from their competitors is the unique ability to literally dial in your tone on each pickup and then tweak it further on stage, in the studio, or during practice to achieve what you want to hear – without removing the pickups or adjusting magnet height!

Each pickup currently retails for $149.99 each, although finish upgrades are more expensive. At this time the only way you can purchase Dialtone pickups is through www.dialtonepickups.com, but they are working with Amazon and other independent retailers for increased distribution.

Personally I see the Dialtone pickups as a way to turn the sound of one guitar into many, all with the simple turn of a few metal knobs and a good ear. These pickups have an old world look and feel that probably comes from being 100% USA built with hand-wound coils. The aluminum cases are even machined at a small CNC shop on the West Coast. If you're not satisfied with your current pickups, then Dialtone's new offerings could help you find that Holy Grail sound in your head, and they're much cheaper than a vintage set of PAF pickups. I'm excited to see what new products they will launch in the coming year too, so stay tuned!

Eric Dahl resides in Nashville TN with his wife and daughter. He is the author of "B.B. King's Lucille and the Loves Before Her" and he does a weekly TV gear review show called the FOX 17 Rock and Review.

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FEATURE

Bluesman Vintage Guitars Reinvents Itself!

by Eric Dahl

What started as a small family owned business, in the back building behind John Scott's home in 2008, has now expanded to become a full service guitar building shop in Spring Hill, TN (just outside of Nashville). I recently caught up with Scott after he returned from the Dallas Guitar Show this year.

Eric Dahl: So when did you move into your new shop and why did you move?

John Scott: We wanted to expand and just didn't have the space to accommodate the amount of work that was coming through the door. My wife and I did a lot of praying on it and suddenly we were blessed to find the building that we are currently in. We went from a small shop to a 4,000 square ft. facility that can handle full restorations, repairs and custom shop capabilities. We also have a Pro Guitar shop that caters to the needs of professional level musicians by carrying only the highest quality vintage, boutique and collectible gear.

Eric: Since the expansion how many employees do you currently have?

John: Counting myself, we have a rotating staff of about 13 guys and gals. All of which have a unique story to tell.

Eric: Your new headstock design looks very aerodynamic, why change on all of your guitars and basses?

John: As with most bands that start off playing cover songs, it takes a while before you create your own original works. The same rings true with Bluesman Vintage. We started off doing accurate replica guitars but quickly found that people liked us for the quality and playability of our instruments, not because they resembled ones from the past. We also grew tired of seeing our basses and guitars on awards shows like the CMAs, Grammy's and VMAs plus countless music videos and not being able to to prove it was our work!

Eric: What is your current top seller?

John: As of right now, our 62 Deville bass is our fastest seller, but the trend swings about every 6 months.

Eric: Why are the names of your instruments all named after cars?

John: We wanted to keep with the theme of a traditional "Bluesman" and what else goes better with blues musicians than Cadillac's? We eventually ran out of Cadillac names and introduced a few other cool hot rod names to the production list.

Eric: So as an expanding company now do you sell more guitars or basses per year?

John: Basses are 80% of our business, but we really want more guitarists too.

Eric: When did you start your own Guitar Reality Show and why?

John: We began production of "Strings Attached TV" around 9 months ago. We were constantly being told that we needed a reality show due to the variety of colorful characters that work at the shop – and our clients. Everyone comes from different backgrounds and has a different story to tell. The thing we have in common is that we all love guitars and we have a crazy sense of humor. *(Readers can check out the episodes on Face Book, You Tube or at www.StringsAttachedTV.com)*

Eric: The episodes are really fun, do you plan to launch it on TV eventually?

John: We are currently in talks with several networks about producing the show. However if that doesn't happen we plan on producing the show on our own as long as the fans keep watching it.

John Scott

Eric: What are your future goals for Bluesman Vintage?

John: Our immediate goal is to grow our sales base on the West Coast and Internationally.

Eric: Do you have any new products coming out in 2015?

John: Yes we are introducing an entire line of Gibson inspired guitars as well as the addition of the 5 string Eldorado and Deville basses.

Eric: Who are some of your current endorsers?

John: Johnny Hiland, Pat Buchannon, Mark Slaughter, Derek St. Holmes (Ted Nugent), Franchesca Battistelli, Mark Clay (Newsong), Jaymi Millard (Innocent Minday), Toddi Funk (Toby Mac), Adam Shoenfeld (Time McGraw/Big & Rich), Robbie Harrington (Brooks and Dunn), Matt Mangano (Zac Brown) and many more.

Eric: Where is the best place for readers to find out more about your instruments?

John: www.facebook.com/bluesmanvintage or www.bluesmanvintage.com

Eric: Do you still build custom shop models or just standard models now?

John: We offer a menu of options to our customers so that they can create the guitar that they want, rather than the one they settle for. We're kind of like a "Build a Bear" shop for guitarists.

Eric: Except instead of outfits, hats and shoes for the bears, your team offers pickup choices, neck sizes, hard ware options and aging of finishes?

John: Exactly and the "Bluesman Blender" control if they choose it. This is our very own hand built circuit that allows players to have more pickup configurations than a traditional guitar. It makes the Bluesman Sedan the most tonally diverse three pickup guitar on the market.

The starting price on Bluesman Vintage instruments is $1,950 street and can go up to $4,599 depending upon the options that you choose. BV has become known in professional circles for recreating treasured vintage instruments, so the vintage ones can be left at home while you tour and gig with the Bluesman Vintage replicas. John and his staff pride themselves on creating boutique instruments that are still affordable enough for the everyday musician or the pro. When John Scott isn't on the road at a guitar show, he is also a regular musician at the church his family attends each Sunday.

Eric Dahl resides in Nashville TN with his wife and daughter. He is the author of "B.B. King's Lucille and the Loves Before Her" and he does a weekly TV gear review show called the FOX 17 Rock and Review.

PEDAL SNAPSHOT

by Phil Traina

Stephen Douglas Leona. Street price ~ $150

The Leona is a circuit based on an original design created by Skin Pimp founder Ryan Kirkland. I've had quite a bit of time to put this box through its paces. Playing it through a Sebago Sound Texas Flood, a super clean Steel String Singer style amp, I was really able to let the pedal's character shine through. With basic controls: volume, gain, and tone, it was very simple to dial in a variety of tones. I tend to start pedals out with the lowest gain possible, just to test out the boost function. The Leona delivered in spades. The gain structure was a little different than most pedals I've been seeing these days. I could get the low end to be tight or loose with the adjustments of the tone control. It really worked great in a higher gain fuzz style drive. I would classify this pedal simply as a low to mid gain drive and a fuzz for players who don't really like fuzz. Another great pedal from our friend Stephen Douglas Designs.

Catalinbread Belle Epoch. Street price ~ $199.99

The EP-3 Echoplex Tape Echo was one of the greatest delay's ever created. Eric Johnson and Jimmy Page are a couple of the most noted players of the vintage EP-3. The downside to EP-3's was the size of the actual tape machine. Catalinbread has shrunk the tape echo down to a small package, but let's not be mistaken; today's technology has allowed them to duplicate all the intricacies and nuances of the original. Obviously there is no actual tape inside, but it has all the mojo of the original, with controls for the echo sustain and echo delay and the additional REC Level that works like the level trimmer on the original EP-3. The delay range from 80-800ms gives you plenty of options from quick slap back to beautiful long drawn out delay. This may be the most faithful reproduction of that sought after tape echo EP-3 tone yet.

Catalinbread Valcoder. Street price ~ $169.99

Catalinbread has become notorious for taking really cool, rare, and sought after effects and getting the tones into the small footprint of a pedal. The Valcoder is Catalinbread's take on the vintage Valco tube tremolo and amp breakup. Also, using it as a boost with no trem effect gives your rig a different, small amp, vintage flavor. The tremolo effect can cover quite a bit of ground, from smooth and musical to choppy and harsh. The Valcoder is a different take on an effect that many of us love so much. Rev up the Valcoder and start a garage band.

Egnater Goldsmith, Silversmith, Black Metal. Street price ~ $199.99

Bruce Egnater has been around this industry for quite a while. Whether we are talking about his amp building classes, modular technology, or his famed multi-channel amps, Egnater has been an innovator all the way. Would you expect anything less when it came to the pedals? The Goldsmith and Silversmith are set up almost identically to one another. The only thing that varies is the amount of gain on tap. The layout is very simple. One side is a great versatile boost level, drive color, and tight switch. Although there is very little drive on the boost side, it can push the front end of your amp and add a nice texture. The tight switch makes the bottom end a bit more focused; it also allows it to play nice with a variety of amps. The drive side on the Goldsmith is more of a low to medium gain flavor reminiscent of a tube screamer level of gain. The Silversmith pushes medium to higher gain that can get you into the Marshall style breakup. The most surprising control on these two pedals is the voice switch and knob. These controls let you dial in just the right amount of midrange for your particular situation.

The Black Metal is set up slightly different. It is not 2 separate pedals in one. The Black Metal has the high gain tones down, with the addition of a separate midrange section. With massive amounts of gain along comes some noise. Egnater has addressed the noise issue and built in a noise gate. Also, sporting high and low tone controls giving you ample tweakability. If you are looking for a highly fuctional high and modern gain style pedal, the Black Metal may be for you. Check out all of the Egnater offerings.

Option 5 Effects Destination Overdrive 2. Street price ~ 199.95

I have been getting quite a few preamp style drives across my desk over the past few months, but something about this pedal is different. The first characteristic that stood out to me was the low end capacity of the Destination OD2. It has tons of low end! The bass control is after the drive section so it lets you dial in plenty of low end without flubbing out. The overall tone was feeling and sounding somewhat Marshally, but I was able to match tones with my bassman as well. The Destination OD2 has a full EQ: bass, mid, and treble, plus a gain and level control. Stick this box in front of a clean amp and dial in tones for days. I was able to dial in everything from metal tones, brown sound, to a great lower gain amp-like tube break up. If you are looking for a versatile overdrive that won't break the bank, the Destination OD2 may be for you.

Phil Traina, The Gear Concierge
Helping guitar players get the tone they've been looking for. Living the dream in Northern California with his wife and kids.

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Yamaha Silent Guitars – Big Updates!

by Eric Dahl

Since the first time man began making music by banging two rocks together, there was probably someone in the cave next door complaining about the noise, and asking them to please turn it down while his family was trying to sleep! Fortunately for all of us Yamaha musical instruments recognized this issue and decided to do something about it with the launch of their Silent Guitars – and eventually other Silent instruments including violin and upright bass.

When I first saw a Silent Guitar in person, it looked like an artist quick sketch of what a guitar should be – very minimalist; but when you get to play it with headphones on, then you realize what an incredible concept it is to be capable of playing an instrument in silence without bothering other people next door or in your own home! I received one of the first generation Yamaha Silent Guitar steel string models for my second wedding anniversary and have used it extensively for practice and gigs thanks to its portability factor.

This year Yamaha has unveiled the third generation of its popular Silent Guitar series at the Summer Namm show with the SLG200S (steel string) and SLG200N (nylon string). The original models were only offered in a natural finish, but now Yamaha provides buyers the choice of natural, tobacco sunburst, and the classy translucent black. In the new models the detachable body sections (which were previously comprised of plastic) are now made from beautiful mahogany like the neck, and the fretboard is rosewood. The electronics have really taken a leap forward with the SRT (studio response technology) preamp and pickup system, allowing the player to achieve the resonance and feel of a full size acoustic instrument guitar through the use of studio modeling. Much like the current "profiler" amplifiers on the market today, Yamaha did the modeling for us by taking a Neuman KM56 and a Royer R-122 and then recording acoustic guitars in a studio setting to capture their sound. The SRT system was originally developed for Yamaha's A series of acoustic instruments and proved very popular with musicians because you can blend the sound using different mics and the amount of pickup signal to model ratio you desire. Standard features now include: On board effects (including chorus, hall reverb and room reverb), Chromatic tuner, headphone input, ¼ output jack, and aux input (for jamming to the music of your choice), all powered by 2 AA batteries or an included AC power converter. The SLG200 series comes with a well-padded gig bag for traveling that allows you to take the top frame of the instrument off and put in a divided section. They even include a pair of earbuds for you to use on the go.

Some people are put off by the artsy look of the Silent series, but I believe once you try one for yourself you will really be won over. Whether you are looking for a quiet practice guitar, a travel instrument, or just want something that is more portable, the new SLG200's are a winner on many levels. This might be the only guitar that you travel with and no flight attendant will tell you – "Sorry. There's no room in overhead baggage for your guitar. You'll need to check it!" Yamaha has made a great instrument even better with the SLG200 series. MSRP on the new models is $1,015, and the street price is right around $629, which is a great value for a Yamaha instrument that provides so much tonal diversity in such a portable and lightweight package.

Eric Dahl resides in Nashville TN with his wife and daughter. He is the author of "B.B. King's Lucille and the Loves Before Her" and he does a weekly TV gear review show called the FOX 17 Rock and Review.

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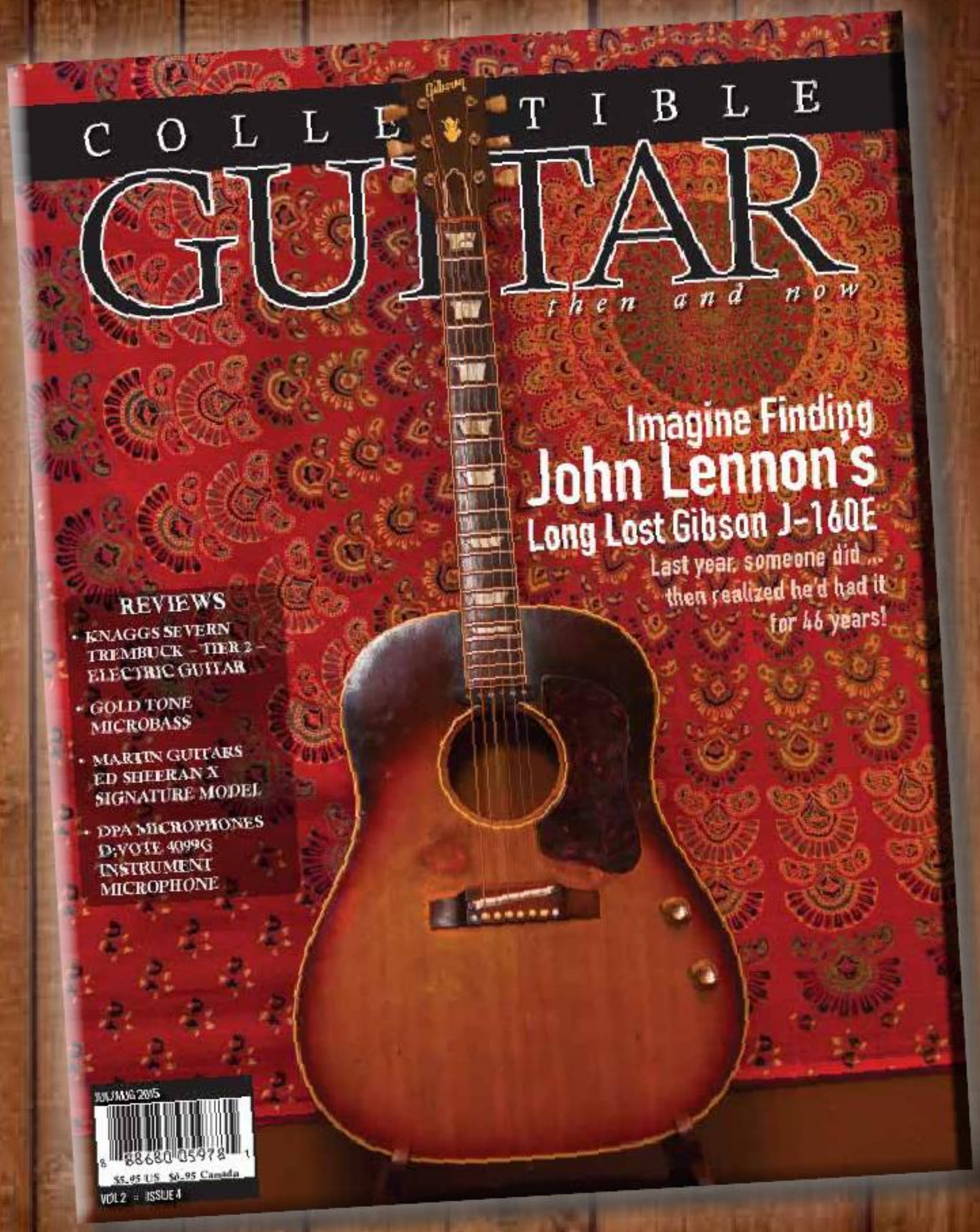

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"Quirky Vintage" cont. from page 10

Kingston S3T guitar, a very Fender-like design.

The Swinger is a light instrument, weighing in at around six pounds or so, but it doesn't feel flimsy. It's solidly built, fully functional, and stays in tune nicely. Heck, it's already survived fifty years of use! Not bad for a cheap kid's guitar.

As I do with most of my 1960's Japanese electrics, I have raised the action of this Swinger and use it as a dedicated slide guitar. I mentioned last time that these guitars also make very good surf music instruments, but surf music holds no attraction for me, so it's presently used to crank out dirty, raw, nasty bottleneck licks in the Chicago/Delta style of Hound Dog Taylor and J.B. Hutto. If I can get my band to add some obscure '60's garage fuzz rock to our set lists, this guitar would be perfect for that application also, and the visual element would be cool as well.

So there you have it; the Kingston Sorrento Swinger, another quirky Japanese '60's electric from the slightly warped but inspired minds of the Kawai design team.

Next time, we'll return to the USA for a look at a tasty offering from Supro.

The author wishes to thank Japanese guitar expert and friend Frank Meyers for information from his great new book, History of Japanese Electric Guitars, which is available wherever books are sold. If you like those quirky '60's Japanese guitars, Frank's book is a must-read.

Bob Cianci is a lifelong musician, music journalist, and author of the book, Great Rock Drummers of The Sixties, and has written extensively for many guitar and drum publications, newspapers, websites, and fanzines. He is a working guitarist and drummer in three bands in New Jersey. His guitar collection numbers over twenty-five pieces at the moment, and is constantly evolving.

"Road Gold" cont. from page 30

any other pedalboard.

Programming these 'moves' into the unit is as simple as holding down any of the 4 effect buttons on the Remote while simultaneously pressing any of the 8 effect buttons on the Profiler. This couldn't be easier and allows you to build some very creative performance patches.

Additional Features:

The Remote is powered via the Ethernet cable that connects it to the Profiler. The screen is large enough to contain any and all relevant information pertaining to each rig or performance, and the screen's contrast is adjustable, making it easily readable in both dark clubs as well as bright stages during day-time performances. One frustration I've encountered with outdoor gigs during the day is where the LEDs on standard guitar pedals get lost in the sunlight, so it's hard to see what effects are on, or even read the lights on a tuner, but with the Remote, that is not the case at all.

For those who need more control over the sounds on their Profiler, up to 4 expression pedals can be connected to the Remote and assigned to control multiple parameters inside the KPA.

A feature that has been extremely useful for me is the ability to program in tempos for each individual song in Performance Mode. Although this is not specifically a feature of the Remote, this is an invaluable feature of the KPA that allows you to simply load a song and not worry about tapping in a tempo (provided your drummer is solid to a metronome).

There's been a lot of talk about the one feature that is only available with the Remote, and that is the new Looper. When the Looper is turned on, the bottom row of 5 buttons takes on a new set of functions. These include your standard, stop, start, record, functions as well as reverse and half-time. The Looper is not only a great practice feature, but also a fantastic writing tool. You can record a simple rhythm guitar with one sound, loop that progression, then choose another profile and overdub a melody on top, choose another sound with effect settings and keep adding to your loop. The looper will play back each separate part with the originally recorded sound, so the sonic and creative possibilities are virtually limitless.

Final Thought:

I have to give credit to the guys at Kemper for once again thinking through virtually every scenario of how a guitarist would incorporate this Remote with the Profiler and allowing us literally limitless options for programming and performing. Both units are extremely light and portable, yet solidly built and can definitely take a beating. Even more important though, they allow the professional musician, whether studio player or active live performer, the ability to have a vast assortment of authentic tones and effects that can be instantly recalled and utilized in any situation.

Michael Elsner is a guitarist/songwriter/producer whose written for shows including American Idol, Amish Mafia, EXTRA, The Sing Off, and So You Think You Can Dance among many others.
www.michaelelsner.com

LOLLAR PICKUPS™

the Straight Truth About Pickups by Jason Lollar

The "magic" found in some (but not all) classic vintage pickups was created by accident. Don't let anyone tell you different. And over time, some pretty stellar accidents happened. The only way to recreate that magic is to study more than a few exceptional examples of all the classic pickup types, while acquiring a thorough understanding of exactly what materials were used and precisely how each pickup was constructed and wound. Only then is the "magic" repeatable, if you are willing to spend the time and money required to chase the dragon. I am.

I personally design and wind over 30 different pickup models, including all the vintage classics, many obscure works of art known only to lap and pedal steel players like Robert Randolph, and even a few of my own designs that never existed in the past.

I invite you to visit our website for sound clips, videos and current product information, or feel free to give us a call.

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Builder Profile: JEFF JONES

By Jack Mao

One of the great things for me about writing for Collectable Guitar is that I from time to time get to meet and hopefully help up and coming developers like Jeff Jones who makes truly great products but have not yet been able to break through to commercial success.

Actually, I've been wanting to write this article for over a year now since I first met Jeff at Sweetwater's Gearfest back in 2014. Back then, I was walking through the "Flea Market" tent and I usually do and saw Jeff's booth and his even at first glance high quality guitars and amps. As soon as I plugged in Jeff's Bassman style combo that impression was confirmed as the amp sounded spectacular.

Fast forward to this year's Gearfest where again Jeff had a booth. I told Jeff I'd been thinking about our conversation and wanted to do a review and hopefully get the word out about his products.

Here are some highlights from our conversation:

How long have you been building amps and guitars?

I started with amps in the late 70's after I finished school, mostly modifications and a few builds, guitars came some time later. Although I have been into woodworking my whole life, as my grandfather, father and two uncles were cabinetmakers.

It seems like you have taken some design cues from Ken Fisher/Trainwreck in that no two of your amps are exactly alike?

Yes, I like the way he approached amp building. I try to voice each amp for the best sound, not build many and hope a few sound great.

What amp is the "Token" amp modeled after?

They are my takes on some of the designs Ken built, Token; my tribute "To-ken"

When we talked at Gerafest you had a Token amp made from new old stock parts. Is that commercially available or was that a one-off design exercise?

I have parts to build amps old stock or with modern components until my suppliers run out. At some point I will have to use new parts for all builds, but for now I can do both. If anyone out there is interested in owning an accurate Ken Fisher inspired replica combo amp please get in touch with me.

Which classic amps are you taking your design cues from? At Gearfest I saw a 59 Bassman style and Princeton/ Deluxe styled amp. I also noticed a 62' Marshall Bluesbreaker design - are these amps based on the actual circuits

of the originals or are you developing your own?

Some are old designs and some are my version of old designs. Some are totally my own.

All your amps I have seen are extremely well built - can you tell me a little about the construction details of each of the amps?

We hand build all amps from the ground up. I get some chassis pre made but some are hand made by me for the custom designs. The rest of the amp is hand made. And we build all the cabinets… hardwood, tweed or tolex.

Are your amps designs point to point or do you use circuit boards?

I build most of my amps on a turret board design, not a true point to point design like Little Walter Amps. Closer in layout design to older Marshall and Fender designs.

What are your goals as a manufacturer – are you looking to mass produce your amps or establish yourself essentially as a custom shop?

I would like to remain a custom shop for now, increase exposure and production gradually. But never loose sight of the goal of great tone over mass production.

I saw when we talked at Gearfest that you also manufacturer guitars - what styles of guitars are you offering?

Strat and Tele style guitars are my main builds. Although I have built others as well, including ukuleles.

I think it's a great story that you have been developing your products at night while holding done your day job at the Pawn Shop - that must take an amazing amount of dedication – let alone time consuming and personal sacrifice. How many years has it taken to develop your amp and guitar designs?

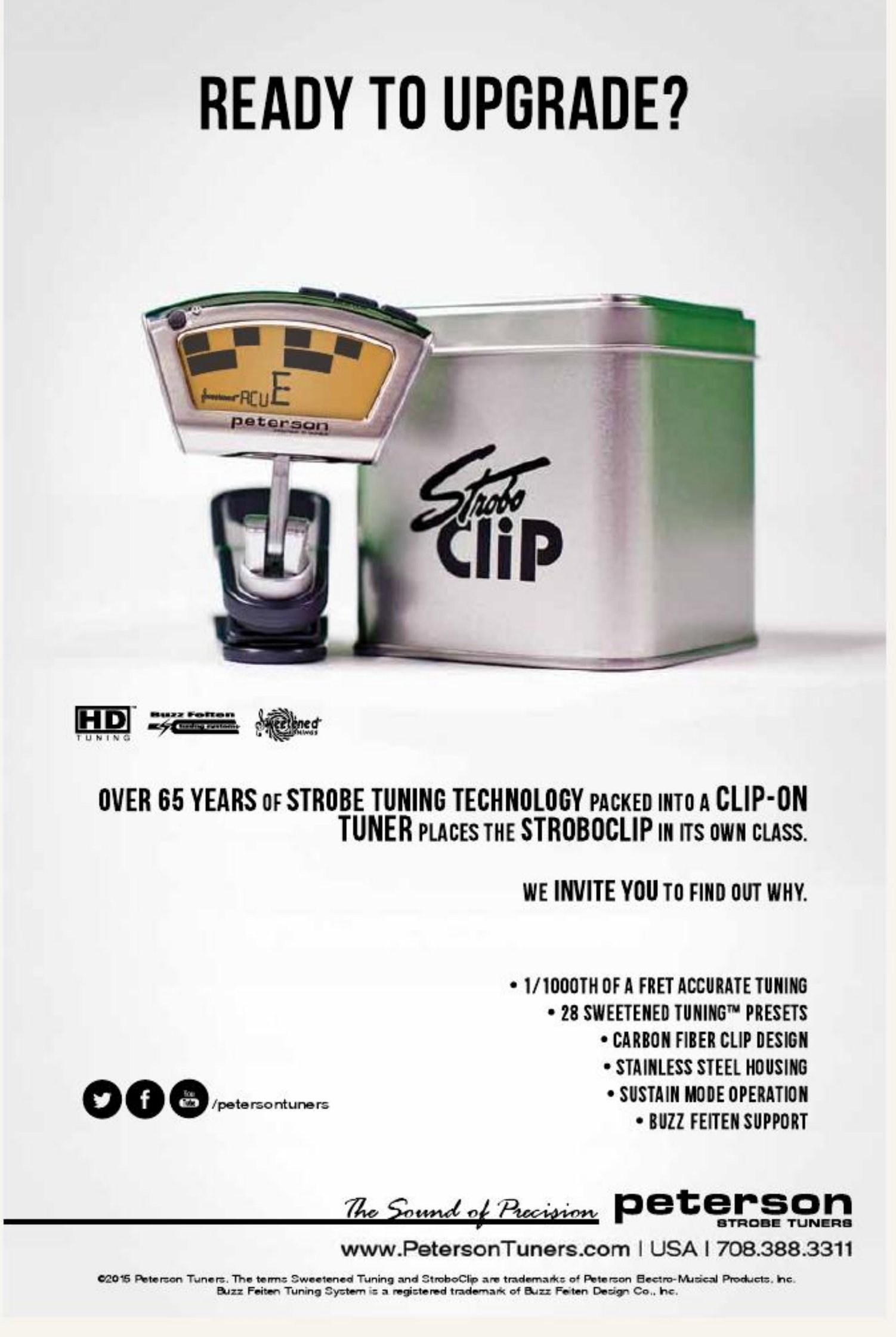
Seriously about five to six years, although I have been working with this stuff since the 1970's. At times it seems overwhelming but when I can stand back and see and hear the end result you tend to forget the sacrifice.

Where can our readers go online to hear the different amps you build?

Our web site www.tokenguitaramps.com has some sound clips and I am working on a web site for the Jones line of products. There is a link on my Token Amp page to Jones Amps Facebook page.

Like I said in the intro to this interview Jeff makes great sounding high quality products and is defiantly a success story waiting to happen.

If you are looking for a high quality amp based on the classic designs but with some modern design cues contact Jeff Jones at Jones Custom Amplifiers and Guitars at (574)607-1471 - You can also email Jeff at jones9095@sbcglobal.com or visit www.tokenguitaramps.com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FEATURE

Gibson Fires Long-time Artist Relations Wiz Pat Foley; But Don't Worry … He's Doing Just Fine!

by Gabriel J. Hernandez

The name Patrick Foley and the Gibson Custom Shop have been synonymous with each other since 1994. For the mathematically challenged, that's 21 years … or, more importantly, 21 years of helping establish *and* define the industry standard when it comes to artist relations and the development of custom-designed guitars based on the guitars of the artists that made them famous in the first place.

Think of people like Paul McCartney, Slash, Robby Krieger, Joe Walsh, Tony Iommi, Johnny Winter, Joe Bonamassa, Warren Haynes, among many, many others. Then think about all the guitars, like ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons and his Gibson Custom Shop "Pearly Gates" model, or the several Gibson Custom Shop models produced for Alex Lifeson of Rush. There's also all of Aerosmith's Joe Perry's Gibson Custom Shop Les Pauls, and all the Pete Townshend Gibson models, both acoustic and electric. There's also the infamous Jeff Beck Oxblood Les Paul, all of the Eric Clapton Gibson models, and Duane Allman's legendary Les Paul.

And – of course – you can't even have this discussion without mentioning Gibson's most popular "artist" guitars of all-time, those being the numerous models based on the Gibson guitars owned and played by arguably the most famous guitar player on the planet, Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page.

All of these wonderful guitars have one thing – or man – in common, and that man is Patrick Foley.

Every single model mentioned above – in addition to a multitude of other Gibson artist models produced by the Gibson Custom Shop over the last 21 years – were all nurtured and brought to fruition by the efforts of Foley and his relationships with all of those artists … artist relationships that were built carefully over time, with many of them having begun long before Foley ever landed at Gibson's doorstep in the early 1990s.

Of course, on the Gibson side there were obviously many others involved in the process, namely Rick Gembar, general manager of the Gibson Custom Shop, plus all the engineers, builders and luthiers who measured, calculated, designed and labored to build the actual guitars. But it was Foley's personal relationships with those artists, built over a lifetime of close and faithful involvement with nearly all of them, that brought their names, likeness, and ultimately their endorsements, over to the Gibson Custom Shop.

Yet despite his unquestionable loyalty to Gibson, and his exhaustive efforts to always make sure things went smoothly (not to mention the profit margins he surely helped Gibson increase over his 21 years at the company), Foley is now the *former* director of entertainment relations worldwide for the Gibson Guitar Company. In a somewhat questionable and slightly iron-fisted move, Foley's time at Gibson ended rather abruptly (without any warning whatsoever) this past summer when he was informed by the company that his services were no longer needed at Gibson.

According to a recent interview and subsequent article that appeared in Nashville's daily newspaper *The Tennessean* on Aug. 9, 2015 – an article that centered on Gibson's change of focus from guitar production to consumer electronics – Juszkiewicz told the newspaper (in an email interview, no less) that, "Gibson is not for everyone. We have very high expectations driven by our goals for growth and making a difference in the markets in which we compete. There are certainly people that do not enjoy the pace and the accountability that we practice. A handful have been very vocal via the inter-

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Pat Foley with Brian May & Jimmy Page

net. We have given the vast majority of our people an ability to grow with us and they have and continue to enjoy our challenges and our success."

Apparently, Foley was not one of the "vast majority of … people" chosen to "continue to enjoy our challenges and our success," despite his unquestioned and proven track record of success at the company.

"I feel like I could have had a much longer relationship with Gibson and the Gibson Custom Shop," Foley said recently from the Nashville office of his new company, Artist Solutions Network, a company he started in order to continue the relationships with the artists he's worked with for most of his adult life. "It's a bit scary right now, but I realize everything ends at some point, and my time at Gibson is now over. Now it's time for something new, and Artist Solutions Network is the next step in the evolution of Pat Foley."

Of course, Foley himself downplays his role in the success of Gibson's numerous Custom Shop artist models. But don't let a little modesty and inherent humility overshadow the obvious gratification and honor that a man like Foley duly deserves. After all, the very day he was shown the door at Gibson, only a few hours passed before his cell phone rang. On the other end was none other than his friend Jimmy Page, wondering if the news was, in fact, true. Imagine that … *Jimmy friggin' Page* calling to find out if he'd lost his job at Gibson! How cool is that? And according to Foley, Page wasn't the only one who called. Without going into specifics, Foley did mention that his departure from the Gibson Custom Shop would almost certainly result in the company's loss of, "a few signature artist guitars currently in the works."

But all of that is now history, and to Foley's credit his interests are now solely concentrated on his new company, Artist Solutions Network (www.artistsolutionsnetwork.com), and promoting the very first brand to embrace his new concept, the U.K.'s legendary Orange Amplification, which came on board during summer NAMM 2015 this past July. Other than a distribution center in Atlanta, Georgia, Orange Amps has never had any type of artist relations-type office or facility in the US market. That all changed when the company decided to partner with Foley's new Artist Solutions Network, who's new "showroom" is located in Nashville's swanky Marathon Village. And as far as company founder and owner Clifford Cooper is concerned, he couldn't have landed anyone better than Foley to represent the brand… whether here in the USA, or around the world.

As is so common in life, one man's (or company's) loss is another man's (or company's) gain. And the marriage of Foley's Artist Solutions Network and Orange Amps is this cliché's ultimate example.

"From past experiences I don't like to have too much in the way of expectations, but with Pat it's a little different," Cooper said from his office in the U.K. "The people that know Pat, they know him very well and they trust him very much. Pat is a very likeable person. Personally I don't think we could have picked a better person to represent us. I very much like how all of this has come together for both Pat and the company."

Cooper continued, "I was absolutely surprised that we were able to bring Pat on board with us. I first met Pat about 15 years ago when he was running the Gibson showroom in England on Denmark Street. And yes I was very surprised when he and Gibson parted ways, especially for as long as he had been there."

Cooper added that the initial feedback to Foley and the new showroom has been overwhelming, and that Foley has already brought several national and Nashville-based artists on board to join the Orange family, including Conan O'Brien's guitarist Jimmy Vivino and guitarist Kelby Ray of Nashville up-and-comers Cadillac Three. Cooper obviously expects continued growth, and knowing Foley's track

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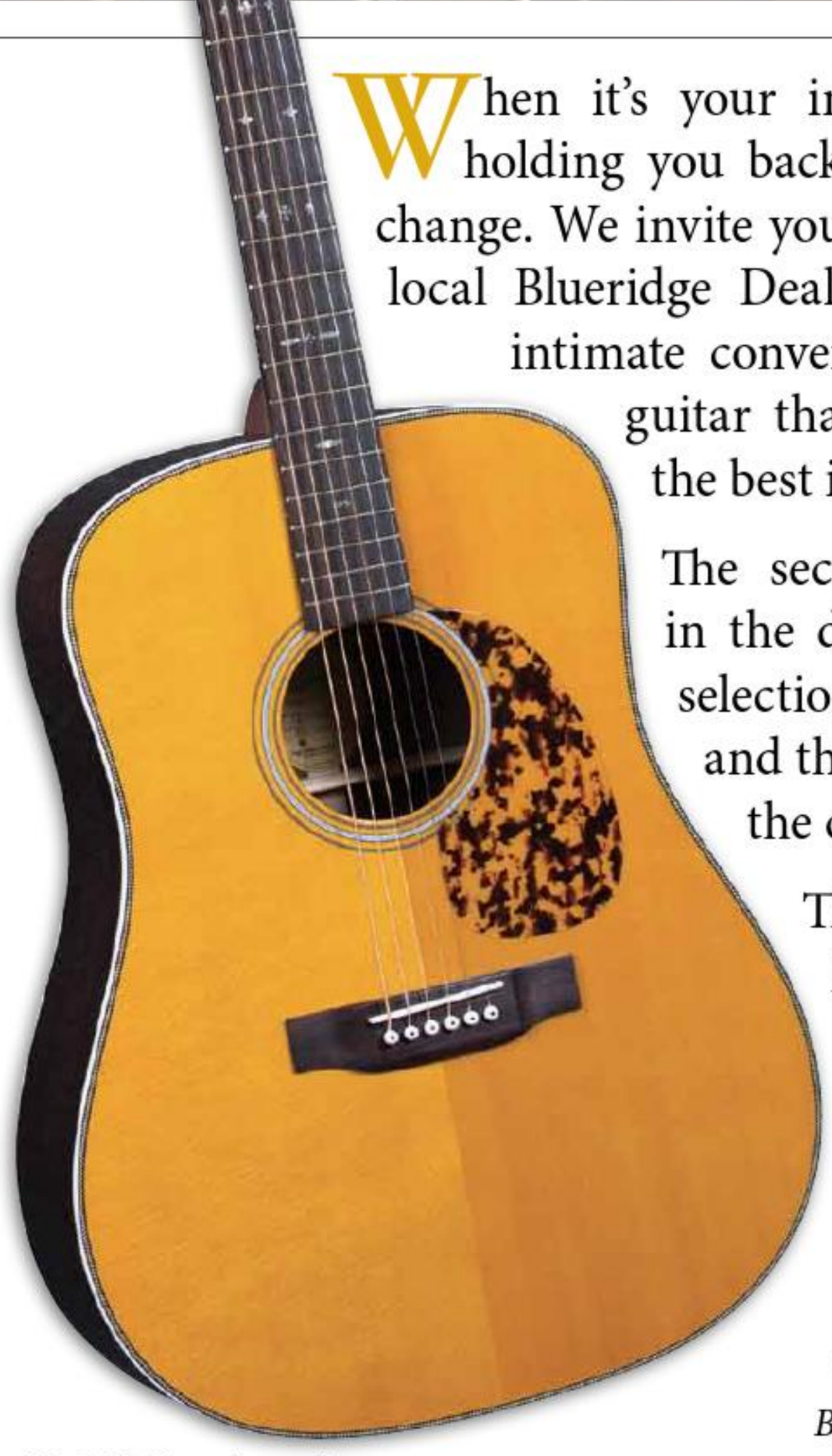

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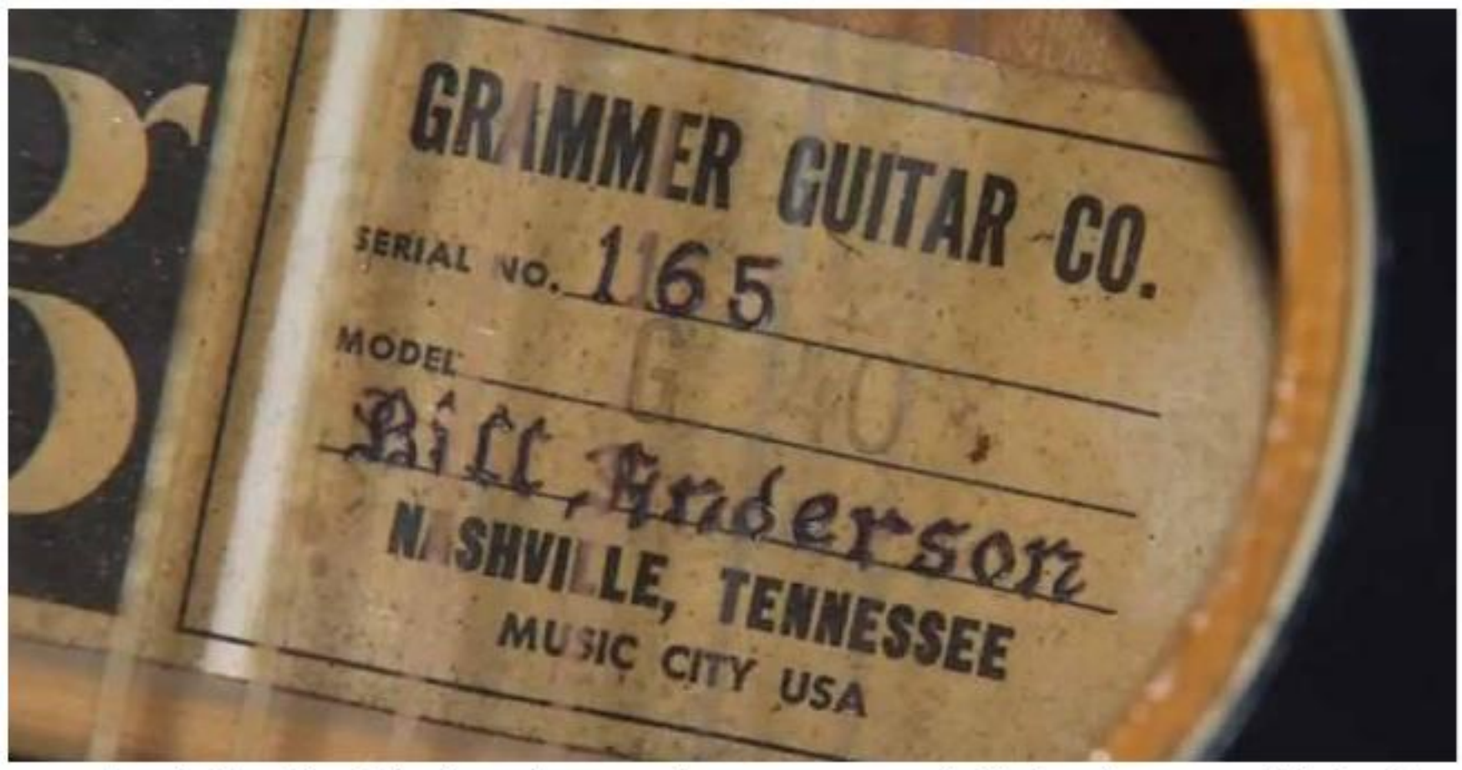
FEATURE

After All These Years

by Roger Sterry



I first became acquainted with Bill Anderson as a boy in the 70's. My cousin had an 8-track tape of his gospel songs; I think the title was "Blessed Assurance". Of course "Still" was continuing to get a lot of airplay, as well his current hits. I can still hear "Liars One, Believers Zero" on the Del DeMontreaux show on 1050 WHN from Manhattan. Bill also penned a "Pseudo" disco tune. The name escapes me, but I think it was "SS" or "Double S", or something like that. It's real campy until you actually listen to all the alliteration on it, then you will realize how brilliant it is.

His footprint however goes well beyond these few songs. He's a legendary singer and songwriter. Some hits he has penned and performed, and others he has given to other singers. (Take a look at Connie Smiths greatest hits and see if one name sticks out more than the rest when songwriting credit is given.) He also has a gift for writing that allows him to get a few loads of gravel for the driveway every few years.

In 1960 he wrote and released a song called "The Tips of My Fingers" for the folks at Decca. That song went to #7 on the Hot C&W charts. In 1963 Capital and Roy Clark released it as well, it went to #10 on C&W and #45 on the pop charts. Well, it doesn't end there, in 1966 Eddy Arnold (# 3), 1975 Jean Shepard (#16), 1989 Anita Perras (#9 Canadian charts) and Steve Wariner brought it to #3 again in 1991 under the Arista label. (For all of us aspiring songwriters, this is the type of song we want to write.) Mr. Anderson has been on the charts for 7 decades.

The man known around the world as Whispering Bill can claim the following:

- Songwriter of the year- 6 times
- Male vocalist of the year
- Duet of the Year (with Jan Howard)
- Host of numerous shows
- Alum of "Days of our Lives" (3 years)
- Member - Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame (1975)
- Georgia Music Hall of fame (1985 and at the time he was only the 7th living performer to receive such an honor)
- Georgia Broadcasters Hall of Fame
- South Carolina Music and entertainers Hall of fame
- The Country Music Hall of fame (2001)

I've yet to mention guitars, and you may be asking why is the Magazine "Collectible Guitar" doing a feature on one of the most awarded singer/songwriters that ever lived, yet Guitar player isn't among them. I'm glad you asked…

Let's go to another entertainer (and it all ties in together, I swear). Billy Grammer was a singer and Grand Ole Opry member ("Gotta Travel On" was a big hit for him) . Billy had a dream of making a perfect flat top guitar, and in 1965 The Grammer Guitar Company was born.

Billy got his guitar into the hands of a lot of his Opry friends: Johnny Cash, Porter Wagner, and Bill Anderson, just to name a few. So with $18,000 dollars and some warehouse space on Poplar Ave in Nashville, they began production. Billy had two of his guitars, a Martin D-18, and a Gibson J-45, dissected and with pen and paper and much study the plans for the first Grammer Guitar were born.

The first year of production saw the guitar in music stores. There were three models of the guitar, which was 15 ½ inches wide, 5 inches in depth and 40 inches in total length. Workers were turning out one guitar a day. The retail price was $395.00. To safeguard against potential counterfeiting the serial number started off at 1001 (In fact you can see #1001 at the Country Music Hall of Fame). These guitars are truly handcrafted, and many would claim they are some of the best flat top guitars ever created. I played one a while back at Gruhns, when they were still on Broadway, and I can concur that they are a fine box.

The original guitars came with Grover tuners, which were the best available in the 60's. They did switch to Schaller, as Billy liked those machine heads a little better.

In the late 60's Ampeg made an aggressive move to get into the country music market and they acquired Grammer guitars. Within a short time after Ampeg took over (1968) a fire consumed the Poplar Ave facility and, sadly, most records were lost. With Ampeg a few more models were added.

The late 60's and early 70's were harsh on the music industry and there were a lot of changes. Fender (sold to CBS), Gibson (sold to Norlin), Gretsch (sold to Baldwin) and even Ampeg (Unimusic) was sold to other organizations. As times changed and Kaman came on the scene with newer technology (Ovation), and Peavey was introducing the solid-state amps, things couldn't get turned around and Ampeg shuttered the Grammer division. There are still Grammers to be had, and they are very collectible.

Well, full circle, Bill Anderson received a Grammer. I had the chance to sit with Bill about his unique Guitar, which was lost for close to 45 years and was just recovered a few weeks ago (I'm writing this in August 2015). Bill is a true Pro and is a master at doing interviews, so I was nervous. My nervousness was quickly removed. He made me feel like family, we laughed, traded some stories, and had a great time…

Lets pick up the interview here:

Roger Sterry: So, with all that you have accomplished, did you ever think you would get this much attention over a guitar?

Bill Anderson: [laughs] Roger, the first thing I said was I never thought I would be doing an interview with a guitar magazine. I strum the guitar, I know 3 chords, and a capo.

Roger: Do you remember when you got the guitar from Billy?

Bill: Well, it's a funny thing, first when I was inducted into the Opry in 1961 it was Billy who invited and inducted me on stage. We were Opry cohorts, and he wanted to get the guitars into the hands of us entertainers and prominent people, you know . . . product placement and awareness, that kind of stuff. He approached me and I loved it. I played a 1959 D-28 then. I had a deal with Fender and played one of the very first acoustic guitars they came out with. Billy approached me right about the time my deal with Fender came to an end. I loved the guitar. I played it for a good 5-6 years and wrote many songs on it.

Roger: I've seen many clips of you; in the 60's you always had a guitar around your neck, then mid to late 70's it was you and the microphone, no guitar. Was that the sign of the times, or what?

Bill: That's a great question and a great observation Roger. A couple of things really; first, the guitar became a crutch to me and was a buffer between my audience and me. I was finally becoming more secure and was able to put the guitar down. To me, it puts me closer to the audience. Now I'm strumming on stage again. On the road most of the time, and on the Opry I'm 50/50.

Roger: So, you and the guitar became separated at some point. Was it a specific experience where you lost it, or just where you loaned it out and lost track of it.

Bill: I think, if memory serves correctly, I loaned it to a museum. There were many museums popping up back then and they all wanted a guitar and nudie suit. I had lots of nudies, and loaned them the guitar. They went under, as so many did, and the guitar just kind of was forgotten and disappeared.

Roger: The reunion! How did you get this back after close to 4 decades?

Bill: It's really cool! This pawn shop owner in Phoenix acquired it. He is a guitar and music lover. The thing with the Grammer is, they put a label inside with my name in calligraphy. This guy saw it, investigated it, and determined it was mine. If it wasn't for that label I would have never known, but the label was unique. When I saw it I knew it was mine. The first thing I asked was, "Where have you been?" [laughs] Really though, the hero is that pawnshop owner in Phoenix. I brought him out and he presented it to me on the Opry stage. I love talking about it because it's a feel good story, and we need more feel good stories out there. The guitar is more famous then me now.

Roger: Mr. Anderson, it has been such a pleasure. Thanks so much!

Bill: Roger, the pleasure was all mine.

Look for Bill Anderson's new book coming soon "Bill Anderson: An Unprecedented Life in Music"

Roger Sterry, resides in Ohio, Guitar enthusiast and collector, songwriter - father of 4, married to Kim, loves baseball
President/CEO PLMS, Inc.

PRODUCT REVIEW

Eventide H9 Max

by Jack Mao

The Eventide H9 effects processor is arguably the first 21st century guitar effects processor—at least in stompbox format—and represents a true paradigm shift in the evolution of guitar effects processors. At the time of this writing there are simply no competitive products in this price category that offer the level of sophistication, flexibility and audio quality the H9 does. There are three different H9 models available: the H9 Core, the H9 and the H9 Max. All share the same hardware but come loaded with different numbers of effect algorithms. This review will focus on the flagship H9 Max which comes with all of Eventide's H9 effect algorithms included in the purchase price.

To understand what the H9 really is and why it's an important step in the evolution of effects processors, it's helpful to understand a bit of Eventide's history of developing breakthrough audio products. Beginning as Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) for Ampex back in 1971 the company quickly evolved to become a manufacturer of a number of breakthrough products including the Instant Phaser, the first audio digital delay, the first hard disk-based recorders for communications and more.

In 1974, Eventide developed the H910 Harmonizer, the first commercially viable pitch shifter, which has been used extensively by Frank Zappa, Yes, David Bowie, Tony Platt (Engineer for AC / DC for Back in Black), Steve Winwood and many, many other artists, sound designers, producers and engineers.

The demand for rack-based effects processors has slowed considerably in favor of smaller and smaller form factors. Taking on the arguably overcrowded guitar effects market may have seemed like a risky choice, but armed with some of the best effects algorithms ever made they have thrived in the stompbox market, which offers a relatively limitless supply of potential customers.

After developing highly successful stompboxes—starting with TimeFactor in 2007 and followed by ModFactor, PitchFactor and Space over the next five years—a multi-effect stompbox like the H9 seemed a logical next step for Eventide. The H9 is a platform capable of hosting and expanding the entire range of Eventide's library of world class algorithms with all of the control and capability of its sibling stomp boxes and the pedigree of its parents, rackmount processors like the H3000, H7600 and H8000. The H9 can be completely controlled using only the unit itself, but Eventide created a free editor/librarian application called H9 Control to help customers take advantage of the almost limitless range of tonal options. Effects can be recalled and edited on the fly. H9 Control is available for iOS, Mac and Windows.

The H9 Max comes with the complete library of algorithms that Eventide has made available for the H9. This includes every algorithm in its award-winning lineup of stompboxes (TimeFactor, ModFactor, PitchFactor and Space) as well as several algorithms unique to the H9, like the new "CrushStation" distortion effect algorithm. You still have the choice of investing in the dedicated stompboxes individually—Eventide continues to issue updates and improvements to the line, and they are compatible with H9 Control—however you would be missing out on the H9-exclusive algorithms now and in the future. With H9 Max all future algorithms are included at no charge.

Using H9 Control the H9 Max can connect with an iOS device, a PC or a MAC via Bluetooth or USB. Effects are called up and edited in real time and can be accessed a variety of ways, by algorithm, presets, preset lists, etc. The H9 Control application takes the H9 Max from guitar pedal to highly sophisticated sound design tool. By every measure I can think of this as a teacher's dream come true. The H9 Max also has full MIDI implementation so you can use it to control other MIDI devices and some of the H9's performance features.

Looking at the controls on the unit itself, there is a large rotary dial that can control multiple functions (for example scrolling through presets, changing values of a parameter, etc.) as well as five buttons to allow you quick access to other functions. The two foot switches allow the user to bypass the effect, cycle through presets and can also serve as a tap tempo switch. Holding down the two foot switches for two seconds engages a sensitive onboard tuner which conveniently mutes the output while you tune up. The H9 also has a jack for an expression pedal or auxiliary switch.

The H9 Max fits the part of a 21st century stomp box with a look and feel different from any other guitar effects processor on the market. Yet even with all this sophistication the H9 Max is designed to be user friendly and can be effectively used on stage and well as in studio.

At $699 Retail the H9 Max is priced higher than the majority of guitar stomp boxes on the market. If that sounds hard to justify, consider the cost of purchasing all the effects that come with the H9 separately, let alone the editing capability you get with H9 Control. Eventide has really created a new category of effects processor with the H9, every bit as sophisticated as the rack-mount effect processors it has evolved from and infinitely more user friendly. To sum it all up the H9 is really a bargain for what you're getting.

Check out: https://www.eventideaudio.com/h9 for more information.

Jack Mao is a staff writer for Collectible Guitar Magazine.

"Pat Foley" continued from page 48

record that growth is probably not too far away.

Obviously, Foley is looking to do the same, but also by eventually adding a few other companies to his Artist Solutions Network lineup. However, he's more than happy to put all of his current efforts towards promoting Orange Amplifiers across the United States, and to the plethora of artist contacts he still has inside his personal "rolodex."

"I've reached out to a few other companies, and over time I'll be reaching out to a few more," Foley said. "But right now I'm totally focused on Cliff and Orange. Cliff has been tremendous in getting this whole thing off the ground, and has supported me all the way. I really couldn't have asked for anyone better to be involved with. And the brand really speaks for itself. Orange Amps have been around for a long time, so it's not like I have to do a whole lot. I just have to get them into the right hands, and I think I have a pretty decent track record for doing just that."

Yes you do, Pat. Yes you do.

Gabriel J. Hernandez is the owner of Blues Vintage Guitars, Inc., a shop in Nashville, Tennessee, specializing in the buying and selling of vintage and newer high-end guitars and gear. Over a 25-year career he has worked as an investigative journalist for several news organizations and publishing companies, as a staff sports writer for The Palm Beach Post, and most recently as the Web Editor for Gibson Guitars at the company's worldwide headquarters in Nashville. You can reach him any time at 1-615-613-1389, or visit his company's web site at www.bluesvintageguitars.com.

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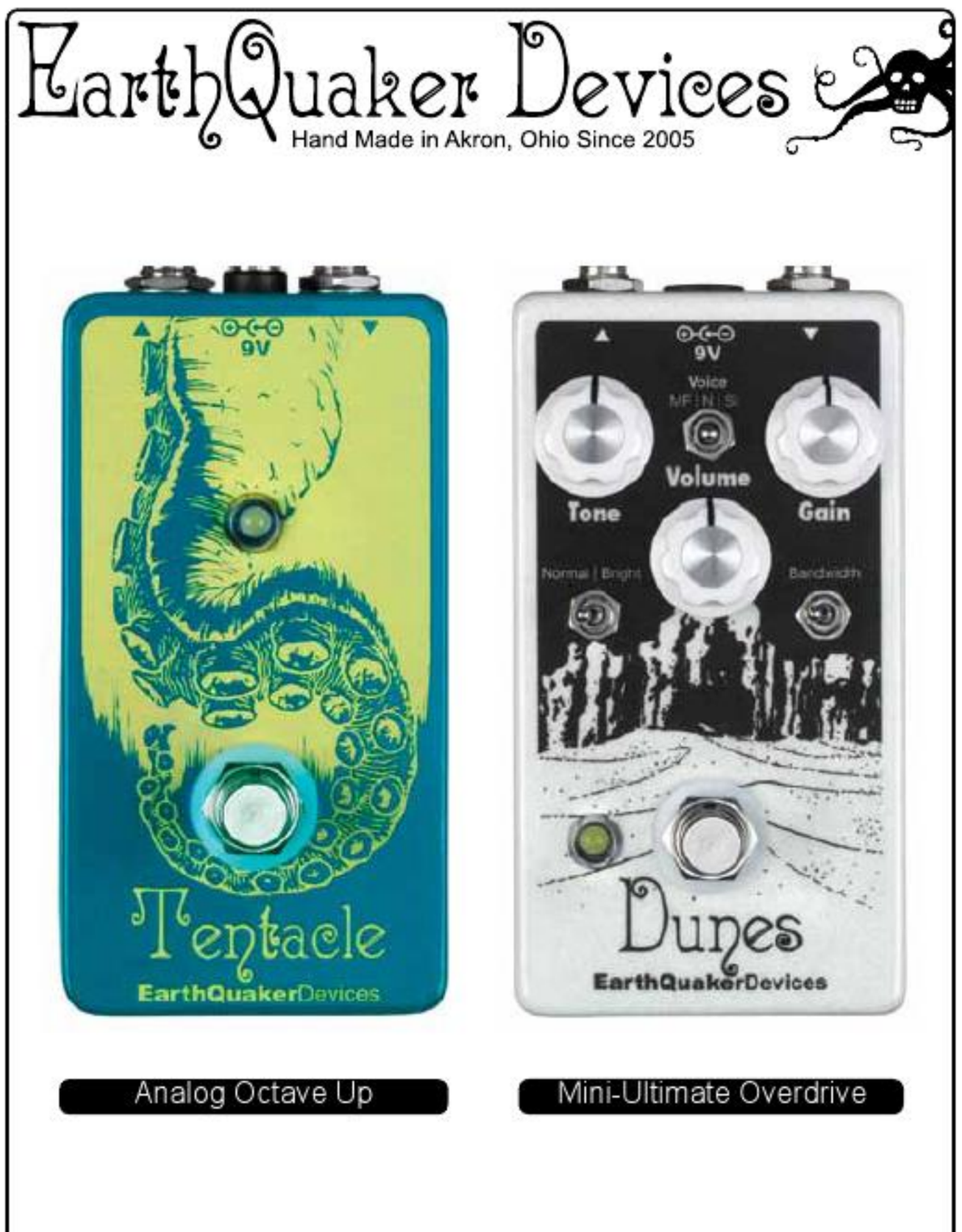


1952 Fender Telecaster

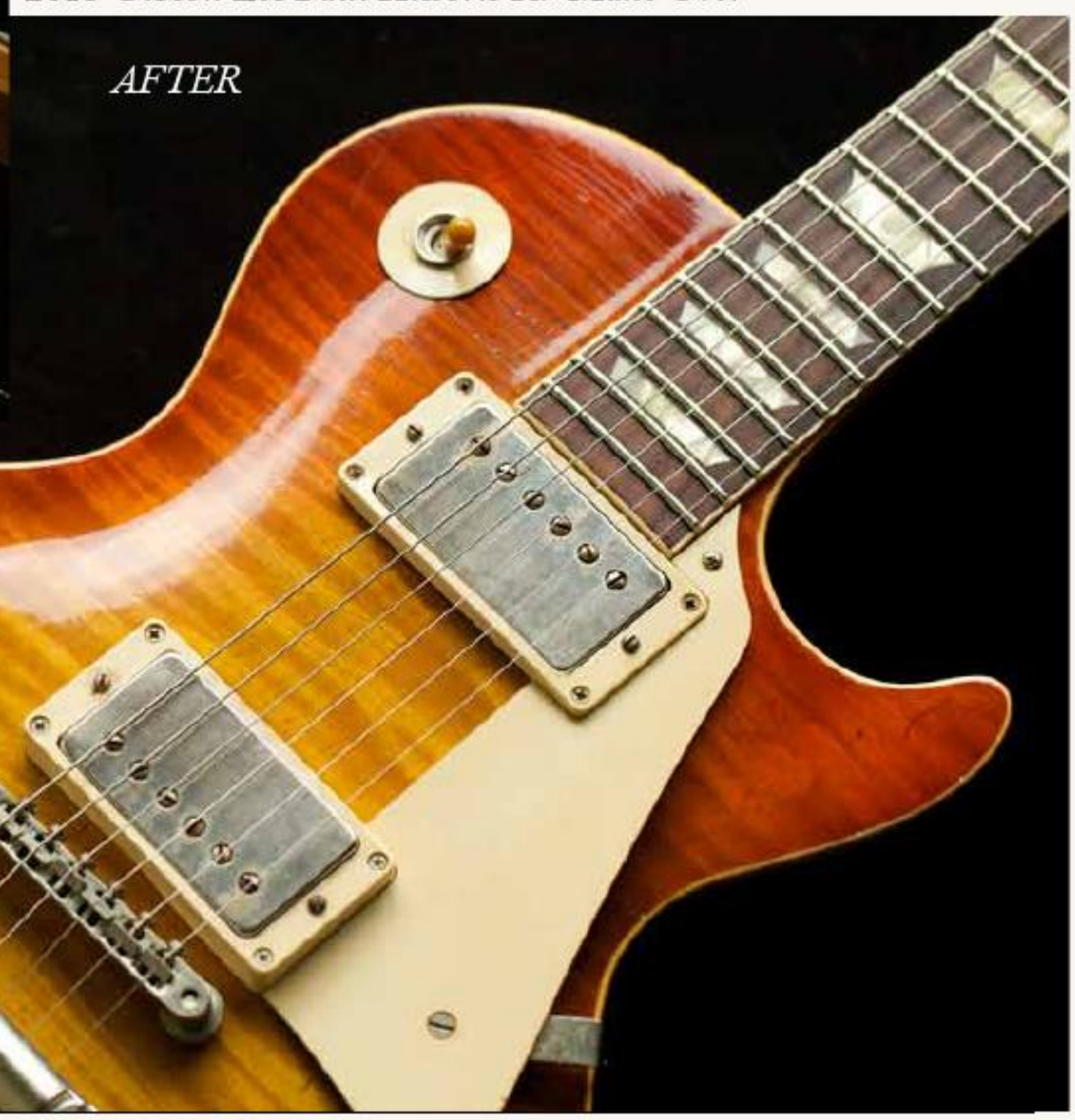
"Turning Back Time" cont. from page 15

when the owner sees the finished product for the first time and a vision that they had to begin with has been realized!

CG: Do you have a dream project for the future?

JR: As cliché as it may sound, I look forward to the day when a 1959 Les Paul Standard is entrusted to me for finish restoration, maybe one that has been painted black or completely stripped. I would take that as the ultimate challenge. ◇

2013 Gibson Les Paul Historic R9 Make-Over



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